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FORT NEW AMSTERDAM



(NEW YORK), 1651.

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CELIO:

OR,

NEW YORK

ABOVE-GROUND AND UNDER-GROUND.

BY

George
G. G. Foster, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF "NEW YORK BY GASLIGHT," ETC



NEW YORK:

DEWITT & DAVENPORT, TRIBUNE BUILDINGS,
NASSAU STREET.

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PREFACE.

We do not know that any apology is necessary for speaking a little freely in this place of the character and design of this novel. The flimsy fiction which forbade an author to be conscious of his literary existence, or to know that he had written at all, is exploded, along with John Doe and Richard Roe, and the rest of the ragged regiment of toys with which our ancestral children of a larger growth were wont to amuse themselves; and we believe it no more impugns a man's modesty to seem to be aware that he has written than it disgraces a married lady to confess to the maternity of her children.

The writer of "Celio," then, conceived his book with the purpose of introducing a new idea into fictional literature. In all ages and all countries the predominant sentiment of the permanently popular literature has been and must ever be, in some form, CHIVALRY. Real life has so many meannesses, so much undignified annoyance and ignoble suffering, that men turn to literature as a relief from the depressing monotony of circumstances and influences by which they are daily surrounded. And although overcharged pictures of that very hell into which men's perverted passions and misdirected selfishness have converted society, may startle the reader into a temporary excitement, yet they are soon and gladly forgotten—while HEROISM, however imperfectly conceived or inadequately displayed, creates at once an undying interest in every heart. This has been well understood by all the masters of romance whose names the public trouble themselves to remember. But taking example from the general character and tendency of the ages in which they lived—and of which perhaps alone they knew—their heroes have been the heroes of the camp and the dungeon—marvelously expert shedders of blood, miraculously patient in enduring the inflictions of tyranny and oppression. In fact, it is enough to make a good-hearted man weep to look over the field of fictional literature, as of history, and see how much self-denial, fortitude, courage, prowess, faith and devotion have been either frivolously expended or absolutely thrown away. Who can fail to be penetrated to the heart's core by the dove-like resignation of Rebecca and the noble constancy of Ivanhoe? Yet who has ever followed their sad fate without lamenting their mutual folly, which wasted the glorious attributes of these choice spirits upon an idle and ridiculous whim? And who has not paused to ask himself, amid the fearful din of Cœur de Lion's battle-ax thundering down the gates of Front de Bœuf's castle, "What comes of all this?"

But it seems to us that it is time for chivalry to get out of leading-strings and devote itself to some worthier end than maintaining with lance and life

that a certain lady's eyes were brighter than the stars, or immolating the most precious and most sacred affections of the heart upon the altar of ridiculous and barbarous prejudice. The past has shown that there is abundance of chivalry in the human heart—let the future show how to expend it in elevating the condition of humanity, and beautifying the earth, its dwelling-place.

It is with such thoughts as these that "Celio" has been composed. The principal characters that figure in it, although copies from no particular individuals, are drawn from real life; and the situations in which they are placed and the trials to which they are subjected, arise indispensably from the author's purpose to show the play of that spirit of wide-reaching and all-grasping philanthropy silently at work in so many thousand hearts. It is his belief that this spirit will extend from soul to soul—reaching upward and downward, as it goes, and bringing all classes upon an electric level—until the whole world will be suddenly born again, and with a new heart, new perceptions, new impulses and new aspirations, will look back with incredulous wonder at the dark and narrow crasis in which it was so long imprisoned.

As to the moral of the story, the author trusts that it will be found in every page of the book itself; yet, lest any should be disappointed in looking for it here, it is proper to say that the key of the story and the characters who figure in it, is the author's belief that vice and misery are not the necessary result of human life in this world; and that were human nature not distorted, evil would not exist. With the poet (and all the poets) we hold that "none are all evil," and that, under the influence of favorable circumstances and beneficent social institutions, all might and would be good.

Carrying out this doctrine, should any reader find this book a poor one, let him attribute it to the influence of unfortunate circumstances and the misapplication of its author's powers—consoling himself with the reflection that it *might* have been better.

NEW YORK, December, 1849.

C E L I O .

CHAPTER I.

MIDNIGHT AND AN UNEXPECTED CONVERSATION.—THE BATTERY AND A SOLILOQUY.

It was deep night. The moon was set down in the almanac to shine, and the careful burghers of course could not afford both gas and moonlight, so no lamps were lighted. But the moon had long burnt out and chastely retired behind her cloudy curtains, and the stifling robe of night, its black folds moist with dew, hung close about the sleeping city. Gradually the noises in the streets had subsided—the omnibuses had ceased their deafening rattle, and the cabs and carriages of loiterers at the saloon, the cafe or the club had driven their last fares hurriedly home and disappeared. The broad glare of the gas-lights from numerous oyster-abysses, where eating and drinking under ground was carried on as never eating and drinking was carried on above ground, were seen, was extinguished; and save here and there, where the ever-burning lamp in front of the residence of some fashionable physician told the night-errant husband, suddenly yet not unexpectedly aroused, that here lived whom he sought,—not a ray of light pierced the darkness. The street-stragglers had departed, each his several way—the beggar to his hole, the thief to his dram-shop and midnight revel, the painted prostitute dragging her victim to her loathsome den; and no sound broke the stillness in the midst of the thickly-peopled city, save now and then at weary intervals the club of the watchman ringing hollowly against the empty pavement, or the footfall of some tired reporter creeping away from his hard toil. The very echoes had fled from the walk, which a few hours before had resounded with the hurrying tread and trample of thousands of human beings, now gone like the figures in a puppet-dance when the tune is played out. Receding from the quarters of the street occupied by trade and commerce, and which were now all dark and silent as the ruined fanes of Palmyra, here and there one might see lights glimmering behind the curtains of some palatial residence, or a line of carriages

drawn up before the door, showing that here the revel was still prolonged; that here the nameless rites of Folly, worshipping at the shrine of Fashion, were not concluded.

Before one of these it is our business, for a moment, to stop—but not to enter. Hereafter destiny may lead us up those broad marble steps and through those massive doors, and amid the scenes, whether of joy or sorrow, they enclose. The doors are thrown open, and half-a-dozen beautiful women, dressed like fairies, float out with the light, and are hurried by their attendant cavaliers into the quickly closing carriages, which one by one hurry swiftly away, while the hostess bids her last guest farewell, and has attended her with unusual deference to the hall door, where she stands, for a moment, watching their departure, their carriage not yet having been announced.

"Mrs. Carleton is yet an invalid, you know," said the hostess, "and too precious to be exposed to danger."

"Madam, permit me to leave you a moment to inquire the reason of this delay. Indeed, I fear you will add to your cold."

"Nonsense, my dear friends," laughed the lady in a voice as if a company of birds were trying to suppress a frolic amid the roses; "you really are in a conspiracy to make an invalid of me. The doctors would find but a rebellious patient, I fear."

"It makes me shudder to think of it," said Celio in an almost inaudible whisper, *quite* inaudible to all but the lady herself; who turned her eyes upon her companion with a sudden gesture that startled him as if he saw a spirit.

"You are very considerate, Mr. Celio, and to show you that I appreciate your care, I will relieve the anxiety of you all. Here comes the carriage."

"Good night, my dear Mrs. Carleton! give our love to Mr. Carleton. Mr. Celio, take good care of your precious charge. Good night!"

The driver was cautioned, at the request of Mrs. Carleton, to go very slowly, as she was afraid the motion might set her coughing. Celio took his seat beside her—the doors of carriage and house were closed, and all again was darkness and silence.

For some moments the carriage proceeded slowly over the ever rough and rugged pavement of Broadway—the Russ Pavement was not then introduced throughout our great thoroughfare—while no word was spoken by its occupants. The lady, late so gay and lively, seemed suddenly to have lost some talisman that had sustained her hitherto, and her head drooped gracefully like a withered flower. Celio felt his veins rapidly distend and pulsate beneath emotions indescribably delightful and novel. It seemed as if he felt a purifying and refining essence infused into his soul, which elevated him to a holy rapture and expanded his faculties almost to a state of beatitude. From this delicious dream he was partially awakened by his companion saying in a low musical voice :

"How strange it seems to call you Mr. Celio! It is as if I were to bestow a title of formality upon my brother."

Celio knew not what to answer. He had known this fair being but a short time, and had taught himself to bask in the light of her queenly beauty and her radiant mind, as in the starbeams of bright night. His pride—almost his delicacy—was alarmed. Is she, too, to prove like all the rest? he asked himself with a gesture of despair, which was remarked by his companion, and made it necessary to say something in reply to her observation.

"My name, I confess, is a strange one—and it is right that to you I also acknowledge that I have another. Celio is but my christian name, the fantastic device of a father whose poetic soul, choked under an adverse destiny and trampled out of him by the wooden feet of common-place, occasionally struggled to give out a spark of its native electricity. My whole name is Celio N——. But my father's name I have taken a solemn pledge shall never be worn by me, unless I may be able to rescue it from obscurity and place it among the proudest and loftiest. You have my secret, you have a right to it, for it is to you that I owe an introduction into that society for which so many bitter, weary years I panted in vain, and whose approbation alone can confer upon me the right or power to burst from my chrysalis existence into light—if I have that within me which may withstand its beams. Oh, madam, you know not, you can never know, how much I have to be grateful for. You are my guardian angel: it is to you and your noble husband that I owe everything, even perhaps my life. Despair and baffled ambition are fearful enemies to contend with, when one knows that he may rid himself of them by a struggle and a gasp."

"Now you make *me* shudder," said the lady, attempting to speak calmly, but with a voice that trembled audibly.

"Forgive me, madam, forgive me. But your goodness has made me bold. I do not feel, when with you, that chilling restraint that keeps me silent so often in the presence of others. What magic spell weave you over me? It is not alone your wondrous beauty; for that I worship as I do the perfect and the beautiful wherever they have found material expression, but which is to me a thing as sacred as the stars that rain their balmy influences upon me. You do not start at this language—you are not offended. I knew you would not be. And yet I do not know how I have dared to say so much. Forgive me, forgive me—oh, do not be angry with me! To lose you were worse than death."

She turned suddenly toward him, laid her hand almost sternly upon his arm, yet tempering the act with an indescribable gesture of tenderness, and said simply:

"Celio, never doubt me. I am your sister and your friend while I live—after, your good angel. You know not—may you never know—all that I have done and will do for you. Your path is a bright one. You have genius, beauty, enthusiasm, romance, passion.

The glorious empire over the minds of men,—and women,—is yours. Go on and seize the glittering prize; and when you find that, like the butterfly glories you chased in boyhood, it is crushed and worthless in your grasp, bring back your heart to me, still its sister and its friend. You can understand this language, or I had not spoken. A great work remains for you; but not till you have become strengthened and purified by many triumphs and trials, will your spirit, be ready to engage earnestly in what it has to do. Now, no more. The night wanes, and my generous and trusty friend and husband will forego his dreams to wonder why I come not back. But here he is!"

The carriage stopped, the door opened, and down came Mr. Carleton in his dressing-gown and slippers, and with an immense cloak on his arm to wrap about his precious wife and keep her from the cold. The broad free light of affection, undimmed by the slightest shade of suspicion or watchfulness, save for her comfort and safety, beamed in his mild, benevolent eye, and benignity made him beautiful. He was some years older than his wife, and a chronic disease, not dangerous but very distressing, kept him almost entirely out of society—where, however, he kindly and delicately urged his wife to go as usual, and in such a manner that she felt it would really pain him wholly to refuse.

"Good night, my kind Celio!" said Mr. Carleton, warmly pressing the young man's hand as he handed his wife up the steps. "I must not stay here in the night-air to thank you, because my asthma forbids. Come to-morrow and see us, and then I will manage some way to find a little breath. Good night, good night; God bless you!"

Celio was alone. Mr. Carleton's house was one of those princely residences which overlook the Battery, and the style, luxury and character of whose owners can well afford to dispense with the plebeian necessity of living "up-town" in order to be considered fashionable. The Carleton's would have been confessed to be high-bred and fashionable anywhere.

Celio was alone. The night had somewhat lightened, and stars were here and there gazing through the veil of clouds that hung before the face of Heaven. A light breeze, full of the freshness and elasticity of the unwearied sea, stole softly over the Bay, and flew whispering among the trees. He was not more weary than that welcome wind. He could not sleep, he well knew, with such a whirl of new thoughts and sensations as enwrap him to-night—and so he walked forth and up and down the now-deserted gravel-paths beneath the rustling foliage.

Sternly and boldly there, as he went to and fro communing with himself, asked Celio of his inmost heart, Do I love her? and undismayed he felt his blood thrill at the thought. Carefully he weighed every emotion, every sensation, every remembrance—for Celio was a severe metaphysician, and no slightest shade of feeling, could

escape the analysis of his keen mind. Long he walked and questioned with himself, but at length he looked up with a brightened face. He had found an answer. He worshipped this bright creature as a being who had stooped from her sphere to lift him above his own—but he did not love her. He was guiltless of so monstrous a crime against God, so unpardonable an outrage upon his noble and great-hearted friend. No, he did not love her! Poor youth! and it never entered thy silly head, with its ambrosial locks of auburn, curling about thy temples like vineleaves in moonlight shadow wreathed round a statue—it never bethought thee to ask if *she* loved *thee*! Good night, oh inexperienced Celio!

CHAPTER II.

THE FINE ARTS AND AN AMATEUR FIREMAN.—SOMEBODY WHO MAY
TURN OUT A HEROINE.

Fire! fire! Ding, dong, ding, dong, ding! Five times the gigantic hammer strikes the tell-tale bell and then pauses as if to recover breath. Ding, dong, ding, dong, ding! It is in the fifth district; and the Firemen, emerging from underground eating-houses that keep open all night—from cellars and trap-doors, and starting out from unexpected corners, carrying their heavy fire-coats on their arms, or awkwardly trying to run into them as they hold them out at arm's length—gather in most mysterious haste and number about the engine-houses. In a moment the noisy cars with their stubborn little wheels dash furiously by, each drawn by a crowd of young Titans in red flannel, and preceded by a man bearing an immense oyster-house transparency on a pole, by way of a lantern.

The worn-out night was grown old and gray, and a cold, clammy dampness tells that the hour of its death is near; but with the exception of the Fireman, and perhaps a belated bill-sticker or two, nobody is astir. The bell has been jangling for some time, mingling its discordant sound with the City's pleasant morning dream. Undiscouraged it clamors on, sure of a hearing. And at last the drowsy City rubs its eyes, opens its ears, and is awake.

Fire! fire! Ding, dong, ding, dong, ding! The watchmen have actually waked up too, and discovered that a fire is toward—and so they try to compensate by present bellowing for past drowsiness. And now, one by one, turn out the sleepy citizens—for the Fifth District includes the great mart of Trade and Commerce and money

and "operations" in general, and every body in the endurable part of town of course has a counting-room, store-house or bank in the Fifth District, and must go and see about this noisy fire! Had it been in the Fourth District, now, or even in the Sixth, they would not have concerned themselves about it. No, thank Heaven! they do not permit themselves to interfere with their neighbours' business—it is quite as much as they can do to take care of their own!

The conflagration rages, and Broadway begins to fill with apprehensive people, hurrying to see if *they* are safe. From the top of the street you can look down through the calm gray morning and see the thick, pitchy clouds of smoke wreathed round the outline of the tall buildings, more and more frequently fringed with a broad ribbon of darting flame. Not a sound but the incessant clamor of the bell reaches us, and ever and anon takes place some unheard crash, sending a shower of sparks high up into the air, or giving birth to a gigantic column of white flame which leaps upward and loses its head amid the clouds. As we go on, the scene expands and grows more palpable. It is as if one could walk into the perspective of a pictured conflagration and gradually find all the individual elements of the general effect moving and transpiring before him, until he at length stood in the midst.

We approach still nearer, and the scene grows still more and more intense. We hear the roaring and crackling of the flames, the crash of falling walls, and the explosions of casks containing spirits, or oil, turpentine, and other such matters. Anon the shouts of the Fireman are heard piercing the frightful din, and the inevitable clank! clank! of the brakes keeps time to the horrid tumult. The street is now a dense crowd of people, who press close upon the very heels of the conflagration, and but for the furious cries and gestures of the Police, would be inevitably crushed beneath the tumbling walls. The sidewalks, the Bowling-Green, the Battery, are completely covered with every imaginable article of human possession—beds, tables, chairs, frying-pans, magnificent mirrors broken into millions of fragments, costly damask hangings torn from their golden supporters and thrown heedlessly into the mud that the streams of water from the engines have spread on every side.—Here are splendid sofas and marble pier-glasses—rich chandeliers whose tinkling drops look like immense diamonds—piles of the most expensive silks and laces and all exotic goods hurried from the threatened counters of the importers and thrown promiscuously in great heaps in the middle of the plashed and crowded side-walk. And ever the excited and maddened crowd pressed higher and fiercer, as if there was some fearful and irresistible fascination in the scene. Drays, carriages, carts, every species of vehicle, struggled and toiled amid the smoke and flames and showers of fire and falling timbers, on toward some yet unreachd repository of these precious wares—the proprietors urging them on with vehement cries and gestures, as if they were pleading and contending with the fires of another world for the souls

of their wives and children. Here and there some maniac-merchant, too late to save his darling fabrics within whose folds his very soul lay wrapped, ran wildly about screaming in agony, "for the love of God will no one help me! A hundred dollars for a man and dray a single half hour! Five hundred dollars! A thousand! Will no man hear me?" and then the madman would dart away again toward the thickest of the conflagration as if resolved to die among his gods.

And ever, amid the horrid tumult, the surge-like roar of the flames, the din of the thronged streets, the hurtling air filled with hissing and fiery missiles, the screams of women, the shouts of men—came the regular heart-like beating of the engine-brakes, obedient to the patient and gallant spirits that impelled them, and the hoarse, sepulchral voices of the firemen speaking through their trumpets, calmly as old seamen uttering their mandates amid the storm.—Upon the blazing roofs of the highest buildings, where the brain grew dizzy beholding them—surrounded on every side by sycophantic flames that came to lick their very feet in dangerous and hypocritical humility, stood the daring defenders of other men's wealth, working away with ax and hammer and pry and bar—darting in and out at smoke-curtained windows, running along already charred and crackling timbers, or clinging to some forlorn water-spout five stories above the ground, that they might strike one more desirable blow at a certain point, or reach one more package to rescue it from destruction. Never did *Cœur-de-Lion* in his black mail with that fearful battle-ax, do such desperate and dauntless deeds before the blazing Castle of *Front-de-Bœuf*. Men stood in awe and admiration watching them from below; and ever as some dull explosion was heard from underground, or a brighter sheet of flame unfolded itself from the smoke in which it was wrapped, hiding them from view went a shudder through the heart of the crowd, and every man stood transfixed till these brave salamanders again were visible, pursuing calmly their toil as if unconscious of danger.

The fiery sea swept on, and one after another those lofty temples of Trade and Commerce yielded to its force and sunk sullenly beneath its lurid waves, splashing the air afar with meteor showers of burning spray. Wider and wider grew the space between crowd and fire, which no man could pass and live; and a fierce wind, hotter than a thousand siroccoes—the very breath of the conflagration—swept through the narrow streets and round the corners, bearing blazing missiles from roof to roof, and leading the leaping flames from casement to casement. The bright waters of the Fountain in the Bowling-Green shrunk hastily away as the Spirit of the fire passed by—the ground was covered far and wide with falling ashes and cinders, and the Bay, as far as the eye could reach, was on fire with blazing fragments.

In this scene Celio was not idle. He was still walking up and down the Battery, thinking of the strange words that had been

poured into his heart, and dreaming ten thousand dream which vanished like exhalations, one by one, and left him at last with a feeling of inexpressible loneliness and desolation,—when he was aroused by a sudden and sharp explosion, which shook the ground and echoed like the sound of an earthquake over the waters. He looked toward the City, and already thin spires of flame began piercing the gray air, and wreaths of smoke mounted slowly and unfolded themselves amid the vapors of morning.

In a few minutes Celio was in the midst of the scene we have described; but as the flames led on toward a range of residences which fronted Broadway, he naturally left the struggle for silks and merchandizes, to go where more precious hazards were to be run—where life was to be periled, and perhaps the helpless and the beautiful rescued from destruction. The flames had already caught in the rear of a tall building occupied as a boarding-house by many families and individuals, who were enabling some dilapidated family of once aristocratic pretensions to realize some of the economies of Association without conferring any of its comforts. The whole house was already in wild confusion, swarming with human beings, men, women and children, running wildly about and shouting and screaming in every discordant key. Celio entered and began restoring some sort of order and calmness to the men, and of course confidence to the women. For a woman's hope is as active as her despair, and the instant she sees the least chance for safety, or the slightest appearance of self-possession in a man, she takes it for granted that all is safe.

“My good friends,” said Celio, in a light gay voice, “there is some trouble here, surely, but not the slightest danger. We have ample time to remove every thing to a place of security.—The Battery is already full of goods and furniture of every description, and a strong detachment of military and police is stationed to protect them.”

In a short moment every one was systematically at work, under Celio's direction, and every thing went on bravely. The women and children were almost as strong and quite as active as the men; and the crowd not having yet reached the front of the street, there was no difficulty in making way to the Battery with the rescued goods. Such a change as an hour had wrought in the aspect of that still and dreamy place, with the soft sea-wind rustling among the trees! The whole of that beautiful green, already trodden by millions of footsteps and scorched by showers of burning ashes and cinders, was one vast store-house of household goods and utensils of every conceivable shape and use, mixed up in the most grotesque confusion. Here were a group of emigrants, including the whole family, from the blind, epileptic old grandfather to the little baby in its candle-box cradle stuffed in with rags and budgets, picturesque in their squalor and dilapidation. The baby laughed and crowed to see the burning missiles of the conflagration, like fiery

butterflies, swimming between it and the blue sky—the mother made the coffee and dived into the cavernous recesses of the inevitable oaken chest for every thing—and always found it: while the good-man supported the trembling old grandfather and fed him his coffee as if he were—and so he was—the baby of the family.

At every step some new combination of such elements of misery as these presented itself.—The cellars in which so many of the emigrants live had all driven forth their inmates, who were thus, to the number of many hundreds, exposed upon the Battery with their little worldly wealth in the chest, and with nothing but the sky to shelter them, while many had even lost their poor possessions, and were rushing about frantic with despair and hunger.

With calmness and prompt decision Celio had succeeded in clearing the house he had taken in charge, of nearly all its valuable furniture and property, which he had arranged in a place by itself on the Battery and set a policeman especially to watch over. The owners were standing round the pile, very disconsolate but still stoutly bearing up under the encouraging words and smiles of Celio, when the landlady of the abandoned mansion suddenly exclaimed:

“Oh, the artist! the poor old artist and his beautiful daughter! they are left behind!”

“Where? In what room?” instantly exclaimed Celio, turning to the building, which was now enveloped in flames from the rear, which already had mounted the roof and began curling round a sort of observatory, by which it was surmounted.

“In the back attic on the left as you go up,” said the landlady. “But my God! it is impossible to go there now! See, the roof is all on fire, and the flames are coming out of the front windows.”

Celio had heard nothing of this speech but the direction, and was already in the hall of the building, now filled with a thick and choking cloud of smoke that rolled down the stairway. But he disappeared in it with a bound and held his breath as he dashed upward. As he mounted the highest flight of steps he found that here was still breathing place. A door stood open, and approaching it, he saw a sight that instantaneously quelled the fierce excitement of action that raged in his veins and made him for an instant forget every thing but the scene before him.

One entire side of the little low chamber was occupied by a half-finished painting, before which was standing, palette in hand, an old man with silver hair and beard, and an expression of inspiration playing over his noble, benevolent face. It was clear that he knew nothing of the fire, and thought of nothing but the dreams he was striving to catch and transfix upon the canvas. By his side, as if an angel had descended to watch his labor, knelt a slight, brown-haired girl, looking up beseechingly at him, and saying in a voice to break one's heart with its low music:

“Father, dearest father, will you not save your daughter? Think how dear life is to me.”

"What is it, carina?" slowly changing his position and renewing his fixed gaze upon the picture. "See you not, my daughter, that I am very busy upon this noble brow of my Psyche,—not so fair nor so noble as thine, oh! carina!"

"Madonna, save me!" meekly replied the girl, drooping her head upon her bosom and crossing her hands in patient resignation.

But at this moment Celio sprang into the room, seized the astonished old man round the waist and carried him from the chamber, while the girl instinctively caught the hand extended to her, and went whithersoever he led.

The effort was a noble one and thus far successful—for here there was still air that could be breathed with life. But they were not yet saved. Down the stairway a single glance showed Celio that it was no longer possible to go—a sea of flame alone was there. But his daring deed had been watched from without; a tall ladder, just reaching the window, had been raised by the firemen, and a begrimed face, glowing with exertion, at this moment appeared, while its owner beckoned furiously to Celio to carry thither his burden. And now began the fearful contest between the artist and the man. The old painter struggled and raved and foamed at the mouth, to release himself from the grasp of Celio and rejoin his unfinished work.

"It is my life," said he wildly; "I will not leave it: I cannot and live. Save *her*, but let me go and die where my soul is." And he struck his deliverer fiercely in the face and screamed in the agony of his efforts to escape. Oh then was the slight, pale youth terrible to look upon, in the sublime calmness with which he bore the maniac old man to the window and gave him to the stout fireman who stood to receive him. After them came Celio and the poor girl, who had fainted and lay in his arms as lifeless as a statue; and all came in safety to the ground. He had not a moment to think—but instinctively he bore his beautiful burden toward the house of Mr. Carleton, directing the staunch fireman to follow with the old man, who had now ceased to struggle—perhaps to breathe.

Mr. Carleton's house had been early in the morning opened to the sufferers, and presented a scene of the utmost confusion—particularly as the lattice of one of the adjoining buildings had caught fire from a wandering brand, and it was at one time feared that the whole magnificent block would be consumed. The danger had now disappeared, however, and both Mr. Carleton and his wife were busy in comforting the afflicted who had sought shelter with them. To the hands of Mrs. Carleton, Celio confided his charge, with a brief word as to the circumstances under which he had found her; and exchanging a kind glance with the noble-hearted woman and a hearty pressure of the hand with the husband, he hurried away to see what more was to be done.

But the fierceness of the conflagration had passed. At length

the almost superhuman efforts of the firemen had prevailed against the terrific foe, who slowly and majestically paused upon his devastating march. In a little while "the great fire" was over—leaving over three hundred of the largest and costliest warehouses and residences in the metropolis but a wide, wild field of smoking and blackened desolation.

CHAPTER III.

A SOIREE OF THE VICES, WITH HYPOCRISY OMITTED.—MR. BUNCH IS IN DANGER OF PAYING VERY DEAR FOR HIS WHISTLE.

The thieves and robbers had a glorious harvest at the Great Fire. Such splendid perquisites of their vocation had not been realized in many years. It is now generally known that the metropolis is the abode of a regularly organized community of thieves, who have their laws and regulations, much better observed than those which the honest portion of mankind prescribe for each other—and who are regularly classified and appointed, each according to individual merit, age and experience, greatness of achievement, and other circumstances. This classification and distribution is managed with the nicest discrimination, and with a sagacity and sense of fitness that would do honor to honest people's legislatures. They have their pains and their penalties, too, which are always remorselessly enforced, and to break which the most reckless breaker of mere laws does not dare to think of. It is only in the last extremity that a member of the fraternity can open his lips to his accomplices, and even then not in a manner to show the general character of the Association, nor to indicate that there is an association other than a mere casual one, such as a temporary union of interests might produce. When a member has been arrested, and there remains no longer any way of rescuing him from a long confinement or perhaps death, then, if he is sure he can save himself by disclosing his immediate accomplices, he is mercifully allowed to do so—they, in such cases, generally taking good care to place themselves beyond reach before such a contingency happens. This privilege, latterly, has fallen very much into disuse, and may be considered in fact as obsolete. Very often cunning magistrates and district attorneys deceived the poor confiding fellow, and after getting everything out of him they wanted, suddenly forgot their promises of mercy, and sent the prisoner off to punishment, exactly as if he had made no

confession at all. This was hard—but what was he to do? To whom could a felon appeal for justice against a magistrate? The idea was too absurd! So the fraternity now cultivate a grim silence in all emergencies; and such as are caught undergo martyrdom for the general good. Besides, such persons acquire great influence among the tribe after they return from their unwilling sojourn among the inconvenient conveniences of civilization. A man who has been to State Prison once is considered as a prominent and rising member. Twice entitles him to universal honor and respect; while the marks of irons round one's limbs, or stripes upon one's back, are looked upon with a feeling of superstitious awe and reverence.

Notwithstanding its isolation from the every-day world of so-called honest people, this under-ground universe has several points of contact with the other, where they approach each other by such gradually diminishing or increasing shades as to make it almost impossible to say where one ceases and the other begins. One of these points is the gambling-houses of various ranks and grades, which are openly, almost publicly, kept in various parts of the city, to the number of a hundred or upward. They are of all kinds, from the palatial and splendidly-furnished establishment in Broadway or Park Place, with its sumptuous entertainments and costly wines, to the low three-cent drinking and raffling den in the Bowery, and the negro dance-house, brothel and groggery combined, in the Five Points. In these places the various classes of persons who pass during the day for honest people, such as leading politicians, (but there is doubt as to how *they* pass,) merchants, financiers, brokers, speculators, bank-clerks, &c. &c., down to poor desperadoes who live on almost nothing, and strive to eke out an existence by gambling for blown-up poultry, or to forget it by drinking poisoned whiskey, become gamblers and of course swindlers at night, and thus from victims, gradually discipline themselves for making victims in their turn. And so, as we said, it is difficult to draw the line of distinction very closely between rogues and honest men. For how shall we know whether the merchant swindled to-night out of his own property will not to-morrow swindle his creditors out of theirs to come back and try to regain what he has lost: or whether his head clerk, robbed at some gambling-house of money which he could not afford to spend, and gradually involved deeper and deeper, should not at length resort to false entries in the ledger, or abstractions from the cash-drawer? So, one by one, they are drawn into the vortex and disappear forever from their accustomed places in society—to turn up again in the police reports as burglars, forgers, counterfeiters, thieves and pickpockets.

Another neutral ground is the brothel—a fearful passage from innocence to crime, fraught with horrors at every step. But upon this subject we do not enter at present. Our way lies in a different direction.

It was the night *after* the Great Fire, that a company of fifteen or twenty of the most distinguished thieves and robbers in the City and Community to which they belonged, were assembled in one of the upper rooms of a small, decent-looking house within a few rods of the Tombs: and which to a stranger presented no appearance to indicate its real character. On a long table in the centre of the room was an immense pile of heterogenous articles, but all of value. Conspicuous among them were costly pieces of plate, mostly bruised and mutilated. Rich articles of Jewelry, Watches, bars of Gold, &c. &c., were heaped up in profusion, and in a manner which showed that they had been gotten together in some way quite extraordinary. In various parts of the room, on chairs, and strewed about the floor, were innumerable packages of all shapes and sizes. In short, this was a hall of rendezvous for a leading group of plunderers, who, after every achievement, previously agreed upon, met here to divide the spoils and contrive new schemes of depredation. Many were the occasions similar to the present which those walls had witnessed, but never one when the spoils were so great as now. A general consciousness of this important fact seemed to pervade the persons present, and every eye gleamed with unwonted satisfaction.

Little of useless ceremony was observed, but the members speedily drew up round the table, while a tall, impressive-looking man took the large arm-chair at the head, as being his by some undisputed right. Scarcely a word was said, until the Chairman had made a hasty yet shrewdly equal division of the valuable spoils upon the table, and given to each his portion, which was received without a word. At length all but one had been apportioned, and the Chairman, pointing to the remaining spoil upon the table, said in a cold, sneering voice,

"Now then, most respected Mr. Bunch, the rest of this belongs to you and me. You have fulfilled your promises thus far, and have put yourself in our power as the best evidence of your sincerity. Now receive your pay for gulling the dear people and the good City Fathers, and we shall henceforth regard you ever as the most senseless and fit man for constable. You shall be captain of the watch. Don't start at my quoting Shakspeare, Mr. Bunch. I used to do a little in that way before I took to stealing purses. But you are dumb to-night—you seem uneasy."

Mr. Bunch was a buncchy man and his hair was bushy. His eyebrows were also on the chapparal order, and a pair of small blinky eyes winked incessantly beneath them. He fidgetted in his chair, and changed the position of his tobacco—but that not appearing to answer, he took a fresh quid—a tremendous one, almost one entire paper, of ex-Mayor (then plain Mr.) Mickle's Fine Cut—and replied in a voice which he intended for jocularity,

"Why you see, Mr. Earnest, that I'm afraid I shall be obliged to disappoint you. I'm sorry to do it, bekase you have certainly

treated me uncommon civil for thieves; but the truth must out, and the sooner the better—you're all trapped and will be in quod in less than half-an-hour from this time. I have a company of men stationed just outside who are to wait till they hear this whistle, and"—

"Well, my profound Mr. Bunch, go on, sir—I find your story very interesting! Well, as you were saying, 'this whistle'"—and the robber held a small whistle before the eyes of the frightened official, who was in vain fumbling in his pockets for the lost talisman.

"Villain!" exclaimed the officer, starting up and making a rush at Earnest, but being suddenly pinioned to his chair by a tremendous arm which he could not even attempt to resist.

"Don't restrain the gentleman, I beg," continued Earnest in the same cold, sneering tone, at the same time pulling a "revolver" from his bosom, whose six fatal mouths grinned horribly at the poor ensnared officer. "I merely took this bauble from your neck in sport, as we came in, scarcely thinking how potent an instrument it might become. And so you really expected to surprise us finely, in the very midst of our little financial operations! That was a very pretty plan, was it not, gentlemen?"

"Oh, glorious!" replied a long, lanky fellow with a coarse, cracked, grating voice, which had procured for him the *soubriquet* of the Screech-Owl. "Come, let's hang the damned stool-pigeon and get him out of the way."

"Or strangle him under the hydrant," suggested another, who went by the name of Dandy Jake—having been in his poorer days a tailor. "That's a cool and gentlemanly way of dying."

"A damned sight too good for a Police Officer," growled a gruff fellow at the lower end of the table. "I know something of their desarts, for I have been one myself, when I was a less honest man than now. I say hang him, according to rule and precedent."

"Yes, hang him! hang him by all means!" exclaimed half-a-dozen, jumping up and crowding round the poor dismayed officer, as if to carry out the idea without loss of time.

"Gentlemen, good gentlemen, I beseech you to hear me, I was only a joking. That whistle there belongs to my boy at home. I got it for him to-day because he's teething and they come through hard. I didn't mean nothing by it."

"We will see about that, Mr. Bunch, directly," said Earnest. "Every man of you hold fast as you are for five minutes."

Stepping into the street, he went round the block and coming quietly up to a group of men idling upon the corner, he said in a natural, easy manner, "So here you are, boys? all right. Mr. Bunch, whose wife has been taken suddenly ill, requested me to step round and say to you that the expedition (which he said you would know all about) must be postponed for the present. He said you would know this whistle. So here's a five dollar bill he sent you to make merry over your disappointment till the right time comes."

One of the men took the money and spoke a few words apart with the rest, when he approached Earnest and whispered in his ear, "It won't do; one of the men knows you, and he insists that Bunch has had foul play."

He was proceeding to lay hold of Earnest's collar, when the bright barrel of the revolver gleamed in the lamplight plainly in the sight of all, who had hovered round for the purpose of securing their prize.

"There's money for all of you," said Earnest. "Take it and be off. If you persist, six of you are dead men, I swear. Choose, and quickly."

In ten seconds he was alone. He slowly put up his pistol and returned thoughtfully to his companions. When he entered the room there was a pale, livid shadow resting upon his face, that made it fearful to look upon. He resumed his seat in silence, and handed the whistle to Bunch, who instinctively clutched it and blew a shrill cry upon it. Earnest smiled a sickly, deadly smile.

"It won't do, my dear Mr. Bunch," said he, very coldly and slowly. "You have broken our law—the very fundamental law by which we preserve our life and liberty. You have proved yourself a liar and a traitor—not to say a fool, in trusting yourself upon so perilous an errand with such flimsy precaution, and without even seeing that your magic whistle was at hand before you made your silly boast. By the laws of our fraternity, you must die! your hour is come!"

"Mr. Earnest, what do you mean?" stammered the now thoroughly-frightened Bunch; "this is carrying the joke too far. Perhaps you have forgot that I am an officer. I'll have you punished for such language to a minister of the law."

"Swagger doesn't become you, Mr. Bunch, with your teeth chattering in that unaccountable manner. It is because you are, as you say, an officer and a stool-pigeon—a sneaking villain who has tried a deliberate game of selling those whom you called your friends and had sworn to stand by at all times and on all occasions, that you must die. We wage open war against Society, without seeking to excuse our acts, and we are ready to suffer the consequences whenever Society proves stronger or more adroit than we. It is a fair contest, and one in which our imperative rule is to guard first and foremost against treachery among ourselves. You are a double traitor—your doom is death."

A sudden sense of the reality of his situation seemed to take possession of the obtuse Bunch. The deadly palor of extreme fear fell over his face, and his under jaw dropped on his breast, as if already the fatal cord had done its work. Gradually the foam of terror gathered upon his lips, and he sat stark and staring at the cold, impassive face of his denouncer. By a quiet motion of his hand, Earnest had signified his wish, and one after another all had noiselessly departed. The executioner and the doomed were alone, looking steadily into each other's eyes. It seemed that the officer,

although he had not turned his head nor changed the direction of his eyes, had become aware that they were alone, and with the desperate resolution that the extremity of fear sometimes imparts, he leaped suddenly like a tiger upon Earnest, seeking to strangle him in his grasp ere he had time to avail himself of his pistol.

By an instinctive motion, Earnest also grappled his adversary by the throat; and thus the two stood holding each other by the wind-pipe and staring with protruding eyes ghastily into one another's faces. It was a horrid spectacle. Several times Earnest thought of drawing his pistol, but he dared not release either hand from his adversary's throat, lest the sudden increase of strength would enable him to choke him quite to death before the pistol could be made serviceable; and thus they stood—motionless as two demon statues.

This fearful struggle could not last long; and at length the fingers of the officer began to relax their hold and his tongue to protrude farther and farther from his mouth. Then his body bent down and began writhing about in the death agony, and he slipped heavily to the floor. The robber reeled for a moment, and sinking into a chair, strove to recover possession of himself.

"My foolish carelessness," at length he said, resuming with an incredible struggle his habitual lightness of speech and demeanor, "had like to have cost me my life. But who thought the fellow was so shrewd? Well—it was his own fault. I am afraid I have killed him—but it was in self-defence, really and truly. I wonder, (he added with a sneer) whether the Courts would accept that as a valid plea?"

But Mr. Bunch was not dead. Slowly he opened his eyes, and raising himself with difficulty upon his elbow, looked wildly round the room. Catching the eye of Earnest, who had drawn the pistol and held it in his hand, the poor wretch cowered and groveled on the floor, exclaiming in a piteous voice,

"Oh, for God's sake don't murder me, Capt. Earnest! for the sake of my poor wife and child, who never harmed you—spare me, spare me! I will be your slave forever and ever."

Earnest thought a moment, muttering to himself, "I will try this man. If he be faithful he can save me, perhaps, in time of peril, when other friends cannot approach me. I will try."

"Mr. Bunch," said he to the prostrate wretch before him, "I truly had intended to slay you, because you have violated the most inexorable rule of our fraternity, and I run great personal risk in suffering you to escape. But go—you are free! and now, should ever the trial come, we will see whether you remember how to be grateful. Away!—there is no time or occasion for thanks."

With incredible alacrity the sore-throated Mr. Bunch got himself upright und made for the door—saying to himself as he went out—"Well, he's a noble fellow, but he is a thief; and I will stand by him, by ——!"

Earnest looked out after him till he was out of sight; then,

securing his plunder and carefully locking the door, he proceeded toward Broadway, where he was soon lost in the crowd that still went to and fro.

CHAPTER IV.

AN OLD LAMP GOES OUT.—FARTHER PROSPECTS OF A HEROINE—
PERHAPS TWO.—THIS CHAPTER ALWAYS SHOWS THAT THE AUTHOR
HAS TAKEN SEVERAL LESSONS IN ITALIAN—IF NOT MORE.

The old painter never breathed again. His last sigh, his last struggle, his last breath, had been for his picture—the great, half-vacant, yet beautiful picture upon which his whole life for twenty long years had been expended, and which the Conflagration had so cruelly finished. There is something sublime and awe-inspiring in this calm and patient devotion to Art—this utter insensibility to all the ordinary excitements which go to make up life—this withdrawing from the distorted phantasms of the Real to live and hold communion with the fixed, eternal, unfading beauty of the Ideal. The old man's death had been timely—for what were life to him without his picture!—that dumb yet eloquent witness of all the faint, fiery struggles of genius to express its inspirations in material forms—that sacred drapery, upon which the great dreams of the Artist's soul, one by one, had been wrought with most painful yet exquisite care. What to him were life without this? And it was well for him that they both—Artist and unfinished Work—were permitted to perish together. In another world the old man may behold the full and perfect embodiment of that immortal beauty which visited his soul but dimly and in dreams, and the shadowy glances of which haunted him continually and made amends for the hard disasters to which he had been exposed—to obscurity, to poverty, to absolute want for himself and his daughter Nina.

That daughter—surely he loved her! Better, far better than himself or aught else on this earth but his picture—that was his god. His daughter, his fair, sweet, gentle daughter, was everything to the old man. Her presence was his sunshine, his hope, his happiness, almost his very life. For many years—from merest infancy—this girl had been the old man's sole living companion, and the history of their affection was a beautiful romance, a dream of unselfish love made practical.

Upon first becoming acquainted with her loss, she appeared to be

also about to die—not as if in sudden pain or agony, but as if the spirit of life were fleeing away from her. The beautiful flush upon her cheek faded like sunset from the water—the deep eyes closed softly as an infant's sleeping—the long, curling, silken hair seemed to become relaxed and lose its elasticity—and they who watched deemed that the lovely Italian was gone to rejoin the soul of her parent where all things pure and beautiful must meet at last. So long lay she in this trance that they all thought her dead; and even Mrs. Carleton herself, who watched over a charge thus strangely confided to her by Celio, with an intense watchfulness as if her own destiny and life were bound up in that of the beautiful stranger—even she was about to abandon hope, when a slight flutter of the poor wounded heart made the little bosom arch its delicate outline almost imperceptibly. Oh, with what noble, unselfish care did she tend the crushed flower and rear its drooping head—watching with an agony of suspense every sign of slow-returning life! For an instant, when she thought her dead, a thrill of joy which could not be restrained had fled along her nerves and shaken her heart to its deepest fountain-spring. Who was this lovely creature, so well calculated to engage the divinest affection of such a heart as Celio's? Where had he met her? How long known her? What was she to him? All this and more came like a many-headed phantom to mock for a moment the proud woman in her hour of humiliation and womanly despair—for already her tortured heart had taught her the fatal truth, she loved Celio! Why then should she suppress a thrill of joy at the thought that a rival no more existed? She were no true woman had it not had way!

But now this glorious creature lived—hope revived, and the true-hearted Adelaide saw nothing before her but the suffering sister, for whom all her sympathies, her cares, were at once most lavishly expended. And as she bent over her meek and lovely patient, trying by most endearing words and caresses to recall her to consciousness, she insensibly became fascinated by the exquisite grace and beauty of her charge; and often raised her own magnificent head and arched her proud neck to gaze down upon the infant-like loveliness of the Italian with intense and passionate admiration.

Slowly rolled back the rosy tide of life, as faithfully beside her watched her benefactor. All night the struggle between life and death went on, or ceased and was renewed again at fitful and feverish intervals; but at morning, life triumphed and death fled away with the dark shadows of night. The girl slept softly and naturally, her red lips sweetly parting as the sea of life gently ebbed and flowed over the coral of her mouth.

As for Celio he had gone home after his fire-fighting, completely exhausted, and with the unquestioning weariness of youth had slept in utter forgetfulness throughout the night and late into the following day; or if, at intervals, a face and form of exquisite loveliness flitted by on the wings of a dim dream, the pleasing picture rather

deepened than disturbed his slumbers. When he awoke he was still bewildered with the strange scenes and excitements through which he had so recently passed, and stretched out his arms as if still contending with the conflagration. His first thought was, of course, for those he had rescued from such imminent peril; and it was not without an effort that he could even remember where he had left them, so confused and vague were his impressions of that fearful scene in the burning house. Then he remembered the mute but inquiring look of wonder with which Mrs. Carleton had received from his arms the insensible girl. He therefore proceeded at once to the house of his friend, which was with some difficulty accessible, from the immense masses of rubbish, fallen walls and timbers with which the streets were encumbered, and which for several months rendered the usual thoroughfares in all that portion of the City impassable.

Mrs. Carleton had given orders that Celio should be admitted as soon as he called, and he was at once shown to a little private sitting-room up stairs, where he found Mr. Carleton, who had been much exhausted by the excitement and exertion of the previous day, supported by cushions and looking very ill indeed.

"Come in, my dear friend," said he to Celio, warmly grasping his hand. "Adelaide will soon be here. She has been all night tending your poor charge, and just come to tell me that the fair patient was convalescent."

"And the old man?"

"He never breathed, but was dead when the faithful fireman brought him. Yet the poor gentleman had certainly received no hurt. The girl recovered her senses briskly enough, but upon discovering that the old gentleman was dead, she seemed herself as if she were struck lifeless."

"Come and see the loveliness you have saved," said the soft voice of Mrs. Carleton, who had entered, and now beckoned Celio with a smile to follow her.

Passing through a suite of magnificent chambers, among whose gorgeous draperies one could almost fancy were hidden the ghosts of song and wit and laughter that had so often flashed and sparkled through them, they approached a quarter of the mansion where the daylight had been subdued to dawn. Mrs. Carleton drew aside a violet-colored curtain and stood with her companion beside the bed of the sleeping girl.

Oh, she was inexpressibly beautiful—that sweet, fair flower, lying so freshly, so gracefully, amid the virgin whiteness of her snowy couch. So perfect was the outline of her form, that it diffused through the air that undulating sense of the beautiful which is imparted by exquisite music filling it with harmonious waves, while the rosy glow of life and youth made the heart beat with bewildering and delicious emotion.

Suddenly, as if a spirit had touched her forehead, the sleeper

awoke and looked out from amid the curtaining tendrils of her brown hair. At first she gazed upon the rosy hangings and soft luxurious furnishings of the chamber with a look of sweet wonder—then she moved slightly her graceful head upon the pillow, and murmured in a voice that startled the ear like the sudden call of a bird—

“Padre mio!”

“Poor child! Who shall be father to thee now?” sighed Celio, as this touching sight made a tear glisten in his eye.

“At least she shall not want a mother!” exclaimed Mrs. Carleton, with sudden energy. “But come, Celio, speak to her—you who speak Italian so sweetly.”

The girl started at the voices and gazed inquiringly around. But when she met the soft, earnest look of Celio she suddenly remembered all, and a sparkling flush passed over her face as she extended her arm toward him and cried with a passionate gesture—

“Mio Salvatore!”

“No, Signorina—ecco la sua salvatora,” said Celio, bowing toward Mrs. Carleton.

She looked from one to the other, with her great wondering eyes swimming in tears that would not fall, and said in her own beautiful tongue—

“Oh, how happy I am that I hear once more my language! And this sweet place! how came I here? what angel is this that has come to minister to the poor artist’s daughter? And you, Signore, what frightful peril you encountered for us unhappy strangers abandoned of all the world! Oh, that my life could be of some value to you, that I could hope to show you my gratitude! But my father—oh, my father! ah, I see in your eyes—he is dead! Can I not see his face!”

“It is better not, carina,” whispered Mrs. Carleton. “Forget these sad horrors, and let Hope make pictures in your sweet visions. I will come to you again directly;” and she led Celio from the enchanted chamber.

They returned to the little sitting-room, where Celio related the incident of the old artist and his daughter, in a few modest words, and ended by expressing his anxiety as to what would become of the beautiful creature they had saved.

“My dear friend,” said at once Mr. Carleton, “you do us poor justice if you believe we have not already settled that matter. She is to remain with us—to be one of us—to be our daughter—that is, if you can safely trust to our keeping so precious a charge.”

“Nay, now you are cruel,” said Celio with a smile. “You have relieved me of so heavy a responsibility, and one that I was so little able to meet, that I know not how to express my gratitude. But now I must leave you. I have been already too long absent from my pressing daily duties, and you will not be much troubled with my visits for some days to come—at least until I recover the time I have lost.”

"But why do you not leave such bond-service as that horrid tyrant, the Daily Press, demands of its votaries? You are wasting your youth and highest energies in the daily manufacture of that which, from its very nature, dies almost as fast as it is created."

"I am thinking of following your advice," said Celio, in a somewhat constrained manner. "But now, my best friends, I must indeed leave you. Farewell!"

But the truth of the matter was, that he could not take the advice of his unthinking friend. After a life of the severest toil, rendered still more painful and exhausting by the indomitable perseverance with which he had pursued his studies, without assistance or even time, save that he stole from hours when he should have slept;—he was still poor, very poor, and had struggled hard and long ere he had been able to procure a permanent opportunity to labor at his vocation. His quick fancy, extensive information, and great versatility, had now, however, acquired for him, young as he was, an enviable reputation as a writer, and there were few of his class who stood so high as he. But he was yet only a subordinate, and one among a host of writers, some good, some indifferent, some intolerably bad, who write as they are forced to live, from hand to mouth, and never can pause in the petty round driven by Necessity, to see if they have powers of a higher order, or even to produce a finished and deliberate effort of those they are acknowledged to possess. He was exactly in that position where a very slight incident—the smallest increase of momentum—might turn the whole current of destiny and bring him at once from dependent obscurity to fame and fortune. Had he power to lift himself above the dead level where he and so many were fiercely struggling for a bare and precarious subsistence? or should he ever be able to gain time from his daily and nightly labors to make a well-considered effort? These were the questions he constantly asked himself—and as often looked vaguely into the hopeful Future for a reply.

One thing he soon discovered—that a social position was the great lever by which alone he could raise himself to a position whence he could fairly be heard by the public by whom he was to be judged; and to accomplish this he bent all his powers. In the intervals of his severe labors he perfected himself in French and Italian—Music he had studied and knew theoretically when a child, but until now had never been in a situation to command even an instrument upon which to practise. Now he spent two or three hours every day at a music store practising the Piano and voice, and in a few months made most astonishing progress—for he knew all beforehand, not merely generally but critically; and had only to teach his fingers and voice to express the true musical thought that his mind conceived. To such organizations as his, learning is almost an electric process. They seem to be in possession of a key that unlocks at once the mysteries of a science, an art, or a language, and admits them to its very arcana, where are gathered its fundamental elements. Then

analysis and an imitative faculty so rapid as to seem intuitive and creative, enables them to construct with confidence and at once those infallible results which the ordinary student arrives at only by the most painful, discouraging and protracted labor—leaving many less persevering than he struggling and despairing by the wayside. Whatever Celio learned he studied from within outwardly. He began at the heart, found out the laws of its construction and action, and then went straight on to their ultimates. It was not necessary for him to burden his memory with mere details. He learned ideas, and they did all the rest. So, at twenty-two, Celio was assistant-editor of a leading Journal in the Metropolis, an accomplished scholar, a profoundly-read man of the world, a poet, a wit, a thorough and appreciative critic in the Fine Arts, and especially in Music and the Drama, where his word was already considered of very high authority; was recognized and sought after in several circles of the best society in the City—and as poor as a pauper. Ay, poorer—for he had done that unwisest, unjustest of things, run in debt for luxuries which he could have done without, but which were requisite to maintain the position he had chosen for himself. Yes, he was that worst of slaves, a delinquent debtor; and his life was a constant and humiliating struggle to keep on some kind of terms with his numerous old creditors and to discover the means of making new ones. He was not dishonest nor dishonorable; he was as proud, high-minded and independent in his feelings as any man that ever breathed; but the pride of circumstance and position and association had got firm hold of his inflammable nature, and to it he sacrificed everything. He was strictly, painfully economical; and although endowed with a powerful and active sense of physical luxury, yet he cheerfully denied it all gratification, that he might indulge his intellectual tastes and maintain a becoming rank in that wealthy and thoughtless class where extravagance is mere pastime and economy is voted the only unpardonable vulgarity. Thus, although Celio had escaped all brutalizing vices and disgusting habits—was careful and self-respecting in his associations—yet he was constantly in debt and in arrear of his slender income. He was thus subjected to humiliations and embarrassments at which his proud and sensitive nature chafed sometimes almost to madness. Yet he had not the moral courage to forego his expensive society and apply himself diligently to the economies of life, and let his position and fame work out their own fulfilment. These petty and ceaseless struggles tended powerfully to increase his misanthropy and sour his temper. Yet he was of too elastic and versatile an organization to bend long under any one depressing circumstance—and his life was a continued succession of exaltation and depression, exhaustion and effervescence, joy and despair. The mediocre, the common-place, were seldom his. In his bitter moments he felt that within himself lived great energies and lofty duties, and that the new Era which was preparing to burst upon Humanity, (for so he deemed,) had much

for him to do. At such times he formed stringent resolutions to rid himself from Debt—that horrid Incubus—and thus prepare for what he knew must come. But again his impulsive humor changed—ambition, pride, vanity, led him back to his old paths. Society opened its arms to receive him, Pleasure beckoned him, Woman smiled her sweetest blandishments upon him—and he resisted no more.

CHAPTER V.*

TO BE SKIPPED BY ALL WHOSE MORALITY CONSISTS IN SHUTTING THEIR EYES TO THE EXISTENCE OF VICE.

When Captain Earnest reached Broadway, after his encounter with the policeman Bunch, he stood a moment on the corner by the Carlton, as if irresolute which way to proceed. At length, however, he seemed to remember some appointment, and after looking at his watch, walked briskly across Broadway and down the cross-street toward the North River. He shortly rang at a tall, handsome house, and was admitted by a very good-looking yellow girl, who seemed to know him well, saying, as she respectfully held the door for him to enter:—

“At you, Cap’n?”

“Yes, Cleopatra, and nobody else. Who have you got here to-night?”

“Oh, a few of the gals and boys as you knows. We is some pumpkins, Capt. Earnest?”

“Yes, I believe you, Clappy. Is your mistress at home?”

“Yes—but she’s engaged for a while. She’ll be down direckly.”

Earnest smiled knowingly in reply to the girl’s ivory grin, and passing on to the door of the back parlor, entered. The rooms were lofty and elegant, and the folding-doors were withdrawn to their full capacity, making the parlors appear like one immense saloon. The furniture was what a green-horn would call gorgeous and a man of taste gaudy. The carpet was a luxurious Wilton, flaunting in scarlet, blue and orange, on a white ground; and the sofas, lounges, divans, chairs, ottomans, &c. were of bright crimson

* A few of the details from which this chapter was written are taken from a publication by the author of the present novel, entitled “New York by Gas-Light.” They were originally intended to be embodied in their present form, and are therefore retained as being necessary to the proper movement of the story.

velvet and gilt. A flashy glass chandelier, brilliantly lighted, hung in the centre of each room, and the mantels were well supplied with branches and lights. The effect was really for a moment overpowering; and to one unaccustomed to luxurious apartments and not much given to looking beneath the surface of things, appeared quite like a scene of enchantment. Yet after all, it was cold and hollow and dreary, and a man with a heart would have felt a darkening chill even from the light and laughter that filled the apartments. At the moment Earnest entered a scene was enacting that well deserves a particular description. In the space between the folding-doors stood an immense, high-backed throne-like easy chair, fantastically decorated with a flowered lace-work *tidy*, and surmounted by a sort of tawdry canopy of blue silk, heavily fringed with faded gold lace or gimp work. In this chair sat a handsome-faced, jolly-looking young man, with bright blue eyes and curly hair. In one hand he held a bottle of champagne freshly popped, and in the other a chrystal goblet—while half-a-dozen rouged and over-dressed women were clustered round him, all laughing boisterously and holding up their goblets at arm's length, as if eager for the sparkling draught.

"Fair and easy, Ganymedes all—if you please," exclaimed the gentleman, with a gay laugh. "You have caught me, sure enough, and I cheerfully pay the penalty of getting into the seat of honor. But first of all, I shall help myself—as, after the bottle has gone round, my opinion is that there would be very little left for your humble servant. So here goes! Ladies, I have the honor to drink your very good healths." And suiting the action to the word and the word to the action, down gleamed the foaming current.

This bit of smartness was greeted with a yell of delight by the women, who found that they had a fellow to deal with who had some spunk in him, and promised themselves a glorious time of it. Having quaffed his beaker, the gentleman filled for his fair friends, but found that the bottle was exhausted while half the goblets were still untouched by the electric fluid.

"Here, my yellow rose of Avondale!" he shouted. "Bring us another bottle, and be quick about it. These ladies are fainting."

Another bottle of the "parlous stuff" was instantly forthcoming, and as he turned to receive it, the stranger's eyes fell upon Captain Earnest, who was standing quietly near the door, observing the proceedings with a sardonic smile.

"Ah, here you are at last! Devil take the champagne! Here, girls! help yourselves; it's a process, I guess, that you are tolerably familiar with—and be hanged to you! Old fellow, I'm glad to see you. But where have you kept yourself all this while? I began to think you were not coming."

"I always keep my appointments, Mr. Merivale," replied Earnest, cordially shaking the hand which the stranger extended toward him. "Although, to confess the truth, I had very nearly forgotten it. But now that I am here, we'll make a night of it. Come girls,

stir up Fandango and see if he cannot give us one of his superb suppers. Nothing common and vulgar, but something that will rejoice the soul as well as the stomach, and magnify the viscera while it delights the gastric juices. Tell him that the amount of his reward shall be exactly in proportion to the intensity of his flavors. Come, Rosalina, give us a kiss like a good girl, and then run and see about the supper."

Rosalina, "like a good girl," did exactly as she was bid, without any hesitation, and disappeared kitchenward.

"Why, Captain, you seem to be rather at home here," remarked the occupant of the chair, somewhat surprised; "I thought I was making myself tolerably free on a short acquaintance; but I knock under."

"Yes," replied Earnest, with his eternal smile; "I am pretty generally at home everywhere. I find it the best way."

The ladies seemed to have lost a portion of their gaiety upon discovering that Earnest was in the room, although they still stood gathered round Merivale, talking and laughing all at once; but in a lower tone than before. An indefinable restraint appeared to have fallen upon them, and you could almost see them subsiding.

But Earnest either did not notice this chilling effect of his presence, or was determined to do away with it. He therefore advanced gaily into the middle of the group surrounding Merivale, and said in the easiest and cheerfullest manner in the world—

"Come, come, girls, you are monopolising my young friend altogether. I shall grow positively jealous in a few minutes. Will nobody give me a kiss?"

There was an instant's silence, and then a movement of hesitation among the girls. Earnest's face began to change its expression and his eyes grew brighter as they darted keen glances from one to the other. At length, the youngest and prettiest of the group—a fair-haired, blue-eyed girl of not more than fifteen or sixteen summers, advanced to the Captain, and with a gesture of infantile grace held up her face, saying,

"If you will pardon my boldness, Captain, I'll kiss you—or you may kiss me; and that, you know, is the same thing."

"Not quite, Kitty, not quite," said Earnest, taking both her hands and looking kindly, almost tenderly, into her beautiful face.

"But you shall neither kiss me, nor I you. I love you too much."

"Captain Earnest in love!" exclaimed all the girls in a breath—"come, now, that's too good!"

"Yes," continued a tall, dark-eyed beauty, who, although exquisitely preserved, was evidently at that equivocal age between thirty and fifty denominated by ladies "the prime of life,"—"yes, and with that little wax baby of a thing, when we have all been besieging his heart in vain for—for—I don't know how long."

"Don't tell, if you do, Mag," said Earnest with a good-natured smile. "I won't, and you hadn't better. But there, take that, for

auld lang syne ; and now let us have no quarreling. I have had some very disagreeable work to do to-night, and I am determined to have a jolly time of it with you and my friend Merivale. It would be better if we had half-a-dozen more gentlemen to supper—but perhaps they'll be dropping in. There's the door-bell, this moment." Let us see who has come. Get up, Mr. Merivale, move your throne out of the way, and let us shut the folding-doors. Now, Mag, go and receive the new comers, and if they are of the right set, bring them in here, and we'll invite them to supper. Hurry, hurry—there they are."

Mag left the room, and in a few minutes the folding-doors were opened from the other side, and she came forward, followed by four notable-looking men, whom Earnest introduced in turn to Merivale. With the ladies they seemed already well acquainted.

The first of these new comers wore an exaggerated *Bernous* or loose frock, very much turned up at the sleeves, which were as big as bags, and profusely ornamented about the collar with silk braid, arranged in fantastic shapes of stars and flowers. His pantaloons, excessively tight in the knees, and the waistband girding close around the abdomen in the vicinity of the navel, expanded into a sort of extempore gaiter at the bottom, from beyond the edge of which the toe of an exquisite French boot protruded about an inch and a half. His vest was a thin cashmere plaid, of dark bars on a scarlet ground, looking like the inside of a burning prison seen through the grates. His hat, which he had not removed from the south-eastern corner of his head, had a monstrous brim, and tapered rapidly almost to a point. Two-thirds of his large, vulgar-made hands were crammed into a pair of ladies' yellow kid gloves, the protruding thumb-joint, that inevitable badge of vulgar blood, having broken through its delicate covering to tell its unmistakeable story. Under his left arm he carried a little cane, about half long enough for walking with, and his open-worked and gorgeously-embroidered shirt-bosom was starred with diamonds and over-laid with a massive chain, wreathed into fantastic contortions held in place by the diamond pins, and confined with a large golden anchor-hook to a button-hole of the waistcoat.

But the most remarkable portion of this *distingue* costume was the scarf that encircled the neck and blossomed into two enormous and ferocious-looking bows, kept from quarreling by the peaceful and smooth-shaven chin. The colors of this immortal neckcloth were, like those of the vest, red and black ; but the red was so red and the black so black—the satin was so solid and glossy, shining like polished sheet-iron—that the general effect of this scarf was positively overpowering. You longed for a fire-engine to put it out, occasionally playing upon yourself to prevent your taking fire. Add to this picture, long, lanky black hair, small twinkling gray eyes, a hawk-like nose and a slight moustache, and Mr. Ferdinand Keno stands before you.

"Mr. Keno," said Earnest, shaking hands with this splendid-looking specimen of humanity. "I am delighted to see you—looking so well. Let me confer upon you the pleasure of enlarging the circle of your acquaintances by introducing my very particular friend Mr. Merivale. Mr. Merivale, Mr. Keno."

The others deserve but a few words. One was the dissolute and depraved scion of an ancient and wealthy family, and had spent his entire youth and a great portion of his immense fortune, in an uninterrupted course of dissipation, gambling and debauchery. Naturally destitute of common intelligence—the unfailing result of that incestuous practice of intermarriage which is the bane and will be the destruction of all aristocracies—all his animal appetites were developed with a force and violence proportioned to the feebleness of his intellect; and as in the one respect he was almost a fool, so in the other he was very nearly a beast. Keno, a noted gambler, who had swindled the young aristocrat out of many thousands of dollars, and had as sure a hold upon the remainder of his fortune as the devil had upon both their souls, graciously permitted the young brute to dangle about at his heels, to pay his bills at bawdy-houses, and to keep his cast-off mistresses. This, from so distinguished a man as Keno, was enough for the young nabob. Wild with riot, consuming with drunkenness, reeking with every species of self-abandonment, the human monster recognized but one controlling influence—his friend Keno. Him he worshiped as his god. For the rest, his whole existence was one disgusting compound of vice, violence and obscenity. When half sober, (as low as he ever got in the scale,) he was sullen and indifferent—when fully roused with drink he was quarrelsome, ferocious and cowardly—in fine, he was a brute of the very lowest species. Not so fastidious as a swine, not so interesting as a rhinoceros, nor so manageable as a jackass.

Him also Earnest formally introduced to Merivale; and the brute being in his sullen, half-sober state, and having been specially put upon his good behavior by his friend Keno, who had brought him to this bang-up crib as a great favor, he did nothing to attract any particular attention. We have forgotten to mention that his name was Hammercloth.

After him came Mr. Job Pipson, an elderly gentleman of about fifty, who wore gold spectacles and dyed his hair; and, although having been a regular visiter at the gambling-house for over a quarter of a century, and having during that time added full a score to the ranks of prostitution by seducing poor and virtuous girls, and then abandoning them to their fate—he had still managed to sustain his respectability and credit. He kept a broker's office in a den in Wall street, and he dabbled a little in fancy stocks, note-shaving, pawn-broking in a quiet way, and other such honest employments. He was well known to all the young bloods about town, and often supplied them with money on first-rate security, at an enormous interest, and would sometimes *luckily* win it back from them at faro

in Park Place the same evening. By these means he amassed large sums of money—no one knew how much. In his habits he was an ascetic; never drank—but in secret; and never indulged in any of the open vices that characterised the age. In fact, he bore the reputation, with his landlady and her maiden sisters, of being rather religious and over-particular in his notions—especially as he had never offered to take the slightest advantage of their unsuspecting innocence, although they took good care that opportunities should not be wanting.

At present, Mr. Pipson had a charming young neice, who had arrived but a few months ago, and was boarding at the very house where we now are. He bowed slightly to Merivale as he was introduced by Earnest, and immediately joined the ladies.

The other and only remaining one to be mentioned, was merely the "family physician" of the establishment, who acted either as doctor, cully or stool-pigeon to the inmates, as occasion required. He was a stout, coarse-built, good-looking man, of a jovial and sensual expression of countenance. He was not destitute of intellect, but had no imagination, and consequently was as selfish, as cunning, and at the same time as graceful, as a bear. He was married, and had a large family of children. But his daily walk and conversation were irreproachable, and he had fortunately chosen the very profession that enabled him to carry on his secret practice without suspicion. He rarely ventured to show himself at the little *reunions* of Mme. Persiflage; and even now, as he was introduced to Merivale by the polite Captain, stammered out something about being "obliged to see his patient once more before going home for the night."

"Certainly, Doctor," replied Earnest with a laugh, "you shall have a chance of seeing your patient directly—though I don't know exactly who it is. But as you have fortunately dropped in, you are just on hand to take a little supper and a glass of wine with us. And, in the very nick of time, there goes Fandango's bell."

A light but elegant supper of cold meats, chickens and pickled oysters, (it was too late in the season for the "natives," and the system of planting had not then reached Leonard street,) was laid in the front basement. Let not our unmetropolitan reader suppose that it was down cellar. In a well-built house in New York, the basements are as comfortable and as well-finished as any other portion of the building; and probably three quarters of the good eating throughout the city is underground. The staple of the supper however was the champagne, whose rich yellow light gleamed through its glass prison, like sunshine half seen through morning clouds. Little superfluous ceremony was used, men and women pairing off according to their own liking, and arranging themselves cosily round the table, in positions and groupings rather picturesque than conventional.

Upon surveying the company, however, it was discovered that our

old friend Mr. Job Pipson was not present. During the passage from the parlor to the supper-room he had managed, somehow, to slip out unperceived. In a few minutes, however, he came in, looking a good deal flurried, and asked if any body had seen Matilda. Nobody had either seen her or noted her absence; and after laughing at the old gentleman a good deal, the ladies at last pulled him into a seat beside little Kitty, who seemed to enjoy the joke mightily, and said she supposed it was all correct that "extremes should meet." Pipson was evidently still uneasy, and kept looking anxiously at the door—but he tried to put a good face on the matter, and the supper proceeded.

It was a scene for studying human nature! The reckless and noisy laughter of the girls, who, in presence of their pals and the unusual good nature of Earnest, had regained all their spirits; the plausible and smooth-faced dandy black-leg, eyeing the stranger Merivale, like a snake watching his victim; the discontented yet salacious hypocrite, Pipson, who had begun to get interested in his new companion; the coarse, jolly doctor, gloating over the loosely-robed forms of the women, and turning his eyes constantly from one to the other, as if estimating their different points; the brutal Hammercloth, his dull leaden eye beginning to gleam with a kind of lurid glare, and his vulgar speech growing tender as he encircled the fair Margaret with his brawny arm; the keen and yet easy glances of Earnest, who evidently was among but one of this strange party—had all something so characteristic and *bizarre* that it appeared as if the materials of the picture must have been carefully and curiously compounded for the express purpose of dramatic effect. And yet, it was not so; and a party quite as strangely constituted may be found at any time in any of those places where the hypocrites of society lay aside the monotonous mask of conventionalism and appear each in his real character.

With the women, however, the case is exactly reversed. What to men is perfect abandonment and freedom from restraint, is to woman the most exacting and utter of hypocrisies. When woman abandons virtue she loses her own natural and free life, and must wear a mask of conventional vice, which fills her soul with secret horror and her heart with loathing and disgust. There is therefore a remarkable sameness in the manners, language, and even in the tone of voice, among women of this class, which impresses one much like the monotony of the mad-house. There, too, are all alike. It was this observation that led me first to suspect that female licentiousness is a species of insanity—a suspicion which has become almost a conviction.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Earnest in a loud voice, which instantly fixed the attention of all, as he rose and cut the cord of a new bottle of Renauld & François', "I am about to give you a toast. Therefore, fill, and let it be bumpers."

"Bumpers it is—tops and bottoms, I suppose you mean, Captain!" inquired one of the ladies.

"Certainly, my dear—all in proper order. Now then--

"The health of Mr. Merivale!"

"And remember that he is my especial friend, who met me here by appointment, and is to be treated with all attention, all respect and all *honor*. Whoever fails in this, be it man or woman, becomes my enemy. Let that be understood."

"The health of Mr. Merivale, Captain Earnest's friend?" was heard trying to bubble its way up from half a score of throats at once.

"Now, then," continued Earnest, "I have a very great favor to ask of the ladies—don't laugh, my dears, I mean of all of you; and as I don't often do anything of the kind, I hope you will not refuse me."

"Oh, Captain! of course we can refuse you nothing."

"Well then—let us see. What I desire is this. My friend Mr. Merivale, here, is a philosopher, you must know; and has done us the honor to be our guest on the present occasion, for the purpose of studying human nature. I wish you, therefore, each of you, to give us her personal history, and the means by which she came here. It is not necessary to tell you why I ask this—but it is for a better reason than mere curiosity. Come, pretty ones, who will begin?"

"I move we take it alphabetically," said a buxom beauty, who was for the nonce companion to the doctor.

"Oh, yes," said little Kitty; "and so you think, Miss Virginia, because your name begins with a V, you will get clear off. Now, I move that if it is to be alphabetically, we take it upside down."

There was something ludicrous in this idea, put forth so earnestly and demurely by little Kitty; and everybody was delighted with it.

"Oh, upside down, upside down, by all means!" was exclaimed all round the table.

"But Captain," interposed Merivale, "where's my speech of acknowledgement for the honor you did me in drinking my health?"

"Oh yes, I forgot that."

"Never mind, it isn't too late—Mr. Merivale's speech!" cried the ladies.

Mr. Merivale rose; and beckoning Cleopatra to him, put his purse into her hand and said, "Tell your mistress to pay herself for this delicious entertainment out of that, and keep the rest till I call for it." He then sat down, amid bravoes and laughter.

"By the spoons, old cock!" belched out Hammercloth, using his throat almost for the first time during the evening for anything but suction; "that's what I call a good speech. You shall go to Congress and hang them anti-renters, *you* shall!"

"Very handsome indeed, sir, but very unexpected and very unnecessary," said Earnest. "But now that is got along with, come, Miss Virginia, begin the auto-biographies."

"Well, Captain, you have such a way with you, I suppose I must. But I am afraid I shall make sad work of it. I am no great hand at talking, any how. But here goes:

"I am the daughter of a farmer in Cortland county. When I was about fifteen, my cousin Tom, who was the scholar of my uncle's family, and had just graduated, came to Homer, where we lived, to spend some weeks. He was a handsome young man, and seemed to me a perfect angel. He was so superior to the country boys I had been in the habit of seeing—so deferential and soft in his manner, that he completely won my heart before I knew what I was about. I really don't believe he meant any harm, poor fellow—and if he did I freely forgive him—but one day we were rambling in the woods all alone, and had walked very far and got very tired, and sat down on a bank to rest.

* * * * *

But at last we dried our eyes; and after kissing each other and swearing eternal fidelity, we washed our faces in the brook and went home as gaily as if nothing had happened.

"Well—let me get on as fast as possible. In a few months after this I found too late what I had been about, and was almost insane with terror and despair. My cousin had gone to the city to commence his professional studies, and I saw no other chance than to break the hearts of my poor parents by telling them of my disgrace. But this I couldn't bear. At last I bethought me of going to the minister and making a confidant of him. He was a very godly man, and had always seemed to take a peculiar fancy to me, even from childhood. Therefore, after much ado, to him I went and made a clean breast of the whole affair. The old fellow seemed to be horror-struck; thought awhile, and then, bidding me be comforted, told me he had hit upon a plan for getting me out of the scrape. But the preliminary condition insisted upon by the old scamp was that I should grant him the same favor I had done to cousin Tom! I seemed to have no alternative, and so I yielded. Thus, by my instinctive trust in love and my natural veneration for religion and its minister, was I, while yet a child, perverted to shame. Is it strange that I have grown hard-hearted and reckless, and learned to look on life as a game of cribbage, at which he who notches the most points as he goes along, is most likely to win?"

"True," said Earnest and Merivale, both in a breath—"go on, go on."

"Well—all the rest of my experience is common-place enough. Cousin Tom, soon finding from the levity and hollowness of my conduct that I was not what I had been, deserted me. I do not blame him—and I'm sure that can't be a tear!—but still I never should have given myself to him in the woods, only he said he should die without me, and I was willing to die to make him happy. But I forgive him. Of course it wouldn't do for a man's honor that he should marry a poor girl after he had ruined her. Father and mother—ah, that was the cruelest blow!—at last found out all about it, and father, taking me one dreary rainy evening into their bedroom, made me confess everything. Mother took it to heart dread-

fully, and got sick and died; but father went to drinking, and soon had to sell his farm. His credit was gone, and he couldn't work—so he went to the country poor-house; while I, with madness in my heart, and its determination and coolness in my brain, came on foot and alone to New York to seek and execute revenge upon mankind, and at the same time to indulge my perverted and unnatural appetites to the full. I know I am a demon—a she-devil—as are all women who have lost their virtue; and I mean to make the most of it.”

The handsome narrator, as she went on, had warmed with her subject, becoming fiercely excited with the recital of her own wrongs and crimes; and when she concluded she seemed like an inspired fury. Fire flashed from her beautiful eyes; her well-formed bosom, partially exposed by the dress she wore, (the uniform of her tribe,) heaved tumultuously, and her symmetrical and well-knit frame shivered with passion. Pouring out a brimming goblet of champagne, she gulped it down at a breath, and sank sullenly back in her chair.

“And are you happy now?” at last inquired Merivale.

“Happy? yes! As happy as the devils in hell! But give me more wine—that’s the stuff! Now I feel like myself again.”

“Byron was right in his opinion respecting champagne,” said the doctor, slowly refilling his glass and inhaling the sparkling foam as it creamed round his lips. “The spring-dew of the spirit—the heart’s rain! Isn’t it pretty, my dear?”

“Why, doctor,” said Earnest, “when and how do you find time to study the poets? I had thought that the arduous and incessant nature of your profession confined you exclusively to the *Materia Medica* and the clinic.”

“If you tempt me to be personal, Captain Earnest,” replied the Doctor, “perhaps I might give you something you wouldn’t exactly like to take.”

“Anything from you, Doctor,” laughed Earnest, with a mocking-bow, “I give you my word; anything from you—but a prescription.”

“And yet there have been times when even my prescriptions you have found useful.”

“Well, you fierce creatures,” here broke in little Kitty; “when you get done with your quarreling, we will go on with the business of the evening. Come, it’s Margaret’s turn.”

“You are right, my darling Kitty—and there, Doctor, there’s my hand. Sink the shop and let us attend to our more pleasant occupations.”

“Oh, I don’t bear malice, Captain. So let’s have another bottle, and then for Maggy’s story.”

“I don’t believe that you’ll be much enlightened or amused by the history of my life,” said the half-sullen Margaret; “but as that is the game, I sha’n’t of course spoil fun.”

“I haven’t any fine romance and innocent babyhood and all that

sort of thing, to amuse you with, like Jinny, and all I know of myself is barren enough. The first thing I can remember is being cold and hungry, and half-naked and ragged, and sent out in the rainy mornings barefooted to sweep the crossings and beg for pennies. I have a sort of dim remembrance of suffering and misery before that—but nothing distinct. I was so young, and used to plead so hard, that I did a very good business, and frequently carried home half a dollar at night. We lived in a little back cellar down in an alley in Orange street, where I don't remember at this moment ever to have seen the sun-light enter. The floor was only loose boards, and the black mud and slime used to ooze up through the cracks all about. The fire-place wasn't made for drawing, and there was but a little bit of a window, only half above ground. Half the glass was broken out and its place supplied with old rags. So the room was generally pretty well filled with smoke. The damp used to come out on the walls and stand there year after year in big gummy drops. There was a little closet in one corner of the room—a pine table against the walls, three or four wooden chairs that had been gradually broken down to stools, and a large collection of rags, shavings, straw and other rubbish in the corner opposite the closet. I remember all these details very vividly, because they constituted—together with my parents and brothers and sisters—the home of my childhood, and I knew no other place in the world where I could set my foot. Whether I remember it with pleasure or hatred you may judge for yourselves.

“At any rate, in this one cellar my father and mother, my two brothers and sisters, all lived together. Let me say nothing of them—whatever they were or wherever they are, I have nothing to boast over them, except the possession of a little more energy and recklessness. But I will say one thing. They never beat me when I had been unlucky in my day's work, but often, when I came home crying bitterly with my frozen little fingers almost empty, and dragging my old broom wearily over my shoulder, my mother's face has beamed with an expression of generous sympathy and affection—I know it must have been, for it was so different from all I have seen since. Both my father and mother drank whiskey whenever they could get a chance, and I early imbibed a passionate fondness for it. Yet I remember perfectly well that I loathed the smell and taste of it. But after I had drank it I felt like another being; it seemed as if I was handsome and delicate, and wore fine clothes and had on pretty shoes and stockings, like the fine little ladies I saw walking with their mamas in Broadway. It appeared to transform all the world into the pleasantest, happiest place that could be conceived. At other times I pined and longed for I knew not what; and a vague but fierce spirit of despair and revenge swelled my little heart almost to bursting. But when I had had a lucky day, and father used to give me a drink of raw whiskey out of his bottle, oh, I felt perfectly glorious, and forgave and loved everybody! I was

right—I am right, still. Drunkenness of one kind or another is the only thing left to a poor woman in this world.

“Well—when I got older they wanted me to leave off street-sweeping and take to thieving. But I had not been on the crossings four or five years for nothing, and I had formed designs of a different character. In a word, I was ambitious: and finding that I was going to be handsome, I determined to make my own way through the world. I had already reflected a good deal, and had come to the conclusion that I couldn’t be any worse off, anyhow. And besides, I had formed a sort of acquaintance with a dashing, splendidly-dressed lady, who used occasionally to stop and give me a six-pence and talk to me in the street. I of course almost worshiped her—she looked so fine, her cheeks were so red and her teeth so white; and she always wore brighter colored dresses and longer feathers than the other ladies I saw. I supposed she was the Mayor’s wife or the Queen, at least.

“I was now, I suppose, somewhat over ten years of age, and had already made considerable progress in my grand but very indefinite schemes. I had gradually and cautiously collected together and secreted money enough to buy some second-hand clothes, which struck me as being overwhelmingly grand and splendid. And I was one day thrashing about with my broom and holding out my hand mechanically to every one who passed, and wondering what had become of the great lady who used to stop and speak to me, when I heard some one say:

“There, little girl—that will do. Here’s a penny, but don’t spatter me.”

It was she. And that hour decided my fate. From the victim of a cruel world I became one of its victimizers, its self-created scourges. I see I need not tell you what was the character of my friend. Enough that she treated *me* honorably and found me not backward in adopting her views. In a short time I was regularly established as her partner and assistant, wore clothes as elegant and gorgeous as her own, and commenced my part of interesting and tender child.* Pipson, there, knows what that means. Don’t you, old ’un?”

* The Sunday papers of May 27, 1849 contained an official report of a case strikingly similar to the above. For the information of those who do not read police reports, I append this case, as it was given in the *Sunday Courier*:

EXTRAORDINARY DEPRAVITY OF A CHILD.—On Monday last, a girl—a mere child but ten years of age, and in youthful appearance even less than that, was arrested on a charge of stealing a purse with \$20 in money, from a Mrs. Ellis in Orange street. On being taken to the Tombs, she was at once recognized as a girl who, some time ago, had charged a respectable Irish woman with having stolen \$50 in gold from a drunken man in the street, which subsequent occurrence and facts showed to have been stolen by the girl herself. Suspicion being aroused, and enquiries made, facts were brought to light, which elicited from the girl a confession of other things, forming altogether a tale of crime and iniquity which it was almost impossible to believe could have been committed by one so young and apparently such a child. The facts developed showed that this child had made a regular profession of thievery. That she had for a long time been in the habit of riding in

"Ye-a-a-s, we have heard of the business—brings very good prices, my dear."

"Yes, yes—they make you old scamps bleed pretty freely, although one would think there wasn't a drop of blood in your veins. I don't know as I have any more to say. I don't feel that I have done wrong. On the contrary, when I remember the squalid, loathsome, suffocating home of my childhood, and contrast my condition then with what it is now, I feel as if I ought to be pretty well satisfied at the way I have managed to get up in the world. I live freely and generously, dress like a princess, drink, eat and sleep like a king's mistress, and care for nobody on earth. I sometimes, to be sure, feel a kind of heart-sickness, when I am all alone, or it is a rainy, dismal day, such as when I used to stand barefooted and shivering on the crossings, begging pennies; and at such times something seems to whisper to me that I am a horrible creature. But I don't stand such hysterical spells very long. A good stiff glass of brandy and water soon sets me all right again, and I don't care *that* for society, its good opinion, nor anything else."

During this narrative, Hammercloth had got up and stumbled out of the room; but no one took any particular notice of his absence. At this moment, however, the woman already alluded to as "Matilda," came rushing into the room, exclaiming, "Keep him away! keep him away! he'll kill me!" In an instant Hammercloth was heard swearing and hiccuping on the stairs; and bursting open the door, staggered in with a large knife naked in his hand. His face glowed like a furnace, and his eyes seemed starting from his head. Matilda screamed, and the madman immediately made a rush at her.

Quick as light, Earnest sprang up, and catching Hammercloth's right hand by the wrist, squeezed it so hard that the tendons relaxed and the knife fell on the floor. "What is all this?" he inquired, very quietly.

"What in —— is that to *you*, I should like to know!" said the other. "Take that and be —— to *you*!" and he discharged a pistol with his left hand, through the pocket of his coat-skirt where it had been concealed. The explosion had scarcely taken place, before Earnest, seizing a champagne bottle from the table, struck

omnibuses, and frequenting the markets or crowded thoroughfares, for the purpose of pursuing her nefarious occupation, and that she had during the past five months committed thefts which would amount in the aggregate to hundreds of dollars. It further appeared that she had during this time been living in houses of ill-fame, in the fourth ward—that she had been in the habit of making purchases of furniture and other articles, and making large presents to the abandoned creatures who kept and lived in those places; and still more extraordinary, that this child of tender years but old in iniquity, crime and vice, had actually rented premises, furnished them, and was keeping, with the assistance of some depraved woman, a house of ill-fame. Such statements appear to border on the fabulous, but unfortunately they are too true. This infant in years but ancient in crime, was brought before the Court of Special Sessions on Monday, and her guilt being proven, she was sent to the House of Refuge, in the hope, which, however, in such a case, must evidently be a slight one, that she may be reformed, and become a useful member of society.

Hammercloth on the back of the head, and he fell, ox-like, to the floor, amid the shivered fragments. Earnest then coolly tried himself to see if he was wounded; and ascertaining that all was right, resumed his seat. Meanwhile the doctor proceeded to examine the fallen man. He had tumbled flat upon his face, and a little tuft of bloody froth, not unlike colored champagne, had oozed out at the mouth. The doctor turned him over on his back, and examined the heart, first with his hand and then with his ear. He then shook his head very gravely and professionally.

"He'll never breathe again, Captain."

"'Taint possible!" muttered Keno, "there goes my year's work."

Everybody stood aghast—especially Merivale, who looked about uneasily, as if for an opportunity of escaping. Keno pointed significantly to him.

"No, no, I tell you," said Earnest, hurriedly—"I'll answer for him with my own life." He then added aloud, "Mr. Merivale, I wish you to take especial notice of this unpleasant circumstance. This madman, here, as you saw, was running after a woman with his drawn knife, evidently with the intention of murdering her. I prevented him, when he fired a pistol at me; and in pure self-defence I knocked him down and have accidentally killed him. Is this correct?"

"Captain Earnest, that is literally and exactly the truth; and I pledge you my honor that my testimony to that effect shall be forthcoming whenever and wherever it may be needed."

"And mine, and mine, and mine," said all.

"Thank you, thank you," said the Captain, "but I trust the case will not come before the tribunals. They are awkward and expensive affairs to manage, and it is better to keep clear of them. As for this bull, I don't know as I ought to feel very compunctious for having put him out of the world."

"But then, Captain—"

"Yes, yes, my dear Keno, I know all about that. But never mind; I'll get you another *friend*, shortly. What do you say to Merivale, here?"

The gambler's eyes sparkled.

"Well, well—be patient. And now, let us drag this lump of beef and deposit it in the black hole. Mag, you clear up the room a little. Let us make haste, too—for some wandering policeman may have heard that pistol, and perhaps will be poking his nose in among us."

Taking the body by the heels, Earnest snaked it into the basement hall, towards a door that had been opened apparently in the rear wall of the house. As he approached, a faint, sickly odor, as of dead lime or decaying bones, came up as if from a long distance. With an energetic jerk, Earnest slewed the body round and canted it over the threshold of this door, where, the dead face gleaming ghastly for an instant in the glare of the gas-light, it disappeared.

In two or three seconds after, a dull, stifled sound, came up, as if the body had fallen upon mud or ashes—the door was quickly closed, fitting so neatly into the wall that it could not be observed—and the farcical tragedy of the life of young Hammercloth was over for ever.

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNITIES BROKEN, BUT THE MORALITIES PRESERVED, AS CELIO PAYS HIS TAILOR'S BILL.—THE AUTHOR STARTS A NEWSPAPER.

The season was over. For many weeks the tide of fashionable society had been subsiding, carrying upon its retreating waves the artists and other celebrities who had imparted unwonted brilliancy to fashionable life during the winter. Still a few of the more aristocratic families, who could afford to do as they pleased, threw open their saloons at regular intervals and received their friends as usual, although the spacious rooms were no longer uncomfortably crowded, and all who did come enjoyed themselves much more than ever. There is in all mixed society a certain amount (and no very small amount either) of what may appropriately be called the neutral tint in the picture of social life—the burnt ombre and bistre in the color-palette of Fashion—very necessary and useful people in their way (and in every body else's way) and by no means to be neglected by vulgar aspirants to the honors of high life, just trying to crawl over their counters into the world, or ride upon their yard sticks into the mysterious precincts of fashionable society. But the first week of bright sunshiny weather dismays all these persons, who pack off in hot haste to be roasted at Saratoga, or broiled and bleached at Newport, lest somebody should suspect they are not "fashionable." If, by any sad mischance, one of this class should be obliged to remain in town, he straightway bars up his front door, offers inducements to spiders to colonize the portico—while the members of the household exist in the kitchen and steal out after dark through back streets, for fear some one should recognize them and report them not "fashionable."

But at length the season was fairly over, and Dullness reigned supreme throughout the realm of Fashion and Society. Yet the Carletons did not go out of town, nor did they exhibit any signs of being aware that the season was not in full tide. Celio felt himself more than ever attracted to the house of his aristocratic friends, although he never thought of asking himself why, and was now a

daily and welcome visitor there. He came and went at all times without announcement or ceremony of any kind, and was, in short, fully established as a member of the family. Meanwhile his pecuniary embarrassments increased upon him, and had now accumulated to such an extent that he was in despair. Oh, how humiliating to the high and noble soul of Celio to become the daily and almost hourly victim of duns, to run the gauntlet of every variety of bill-holder, from the arrogant collector of his fashionable tailor, who daily examined him through an immense quizzing-glass while he was making his excuses, down to the poor washerwoman, who, *he knew*, had not the means of buying food for herself and family, unless he could pay his miserable little debt to her! And yet he sometimes had not even this. Since the excitements of the fire and the incidents connected with it, Celio had felt that it was impossible for him to devote that assiduous attention to his employment which was absolutely necessary for the strict discharge of his duty. He felt this, and felt it keenly—but he could not help it. His mind had become too much occupied in a new direction for him to reinstate himself in his old routine and his accustomed habits of thought. The labors of his profession became irksome and disgusting to him; and, lest he should be guilty of that greatest as well as smallest of all meannesses—cheating his employer with poor service—he resigned peremptorily his situation which no persuasion nor remonstrances could induce him to retain.

Oh, then he felt like another being! For the first time in his life he had shaken off from his limbs and brain the shackles of daily labor. He was free—he might do as he pleased—there was a buoyant and sustaining joy in the very thought! But he did not wait long to learn that absolute poverty and want are harder masters than even severe and poorly-requited labor. He had reduced his expenses to the smallest possible amount—had taken lodgings in a poor little garret, and often went to his hard bed hungry, for the purpose of eking out his small store. But he never stopped to think where this must lead to, or that it must inevitably have a speedy end. He regarded only the present.

At first he had not dreamed of loving Nina but as a dear child to whom a strange destiny had given paramount claims to his care and protection. He used to go day by day and sit with her in the little room which her kind friends had appropriated to her, and talk with her in her own beautiful language, until she had told him all she knew of her romantic and touching history. Her father, Gianfrancesco Bounnaturi, was a native of Milan—the son of a distinguished painter, and himself a man of bold and fiery genius in his art, as well as an audacious thinker and a reckless speaker of his thoughts. Such a man could not live in Italy; and he was graciously permitted, by an agent of Prince Metternich, to travel in search of health. This had been when Nina was a mere child; and for several years the artist had been living in the New World, very poor and scant

of means, but contented, and oftentimes even happy---for he had his picture, the great work of his life, ever before him, and his beautiful daughter was by his side.

Nina had received much instruction from her father, especially in music; and possessing a voice of extraordinary power and sweetness, she achieved the greatest proficiency in this divine art. Seated at the piano in Mr. Carleton's quiet parlor, with Mrs. Carleton on one side and Celio on the other, and Mr. Carleton in his easy chair, by the open window whence the air came freshly in from over the Bay, feeding the invalid with grateful breath, she used to pour out her pure and fervid soul in song until she seemed absolutely to be transmuted into a spirit by the refining passion and fire that breathed from her lips and bosom. At such times Celio gazed upon the unconscious and beautiful artist until he dared not breathe for fear of dissolving the delicious spell in which he was entranced; while Mrs. Carleton, looking from one to the other with eyes that dared not shut lest they should expel their tearful guests, would steal away and leave them to the new and unexplored world of dreams just opening before them. Yes—they had a right to love—it was well—she was glad of it. But yet a presentiment thrilled her heart to its inmost depths that Celio did not love this bright being save as a fond and tender brother. How *could* any heart but her's know how to appreciate and admire such a soul as Celio's?

Returning from one of these scenes, his head drooped upon his breast, in gloomy meditation, on his frowning fortunes, mixed with vague, wild, sensations of doubt and rapture which grew like a fever in his veins, and gradually accelerating his steps as if he would fly from himself, Celio felt a hand laid familiarly upon his shoulder, while a voice said:

"Why, as I am a respectable citizen, it is Mr. Celio! My dear friend, how glad I am to have picked you up again! I really almost began to think that you had got married, or joined the church, or some such dreadful thing."

The person who spoke had scarcely the right of claiming so great a degree of intimacy—he had only met Celio at public places—at balls, theatres, concerts, Florence's, Delmonico's and the Opera—and their intercourse had been confined principally to the exchange of the usual civilities. However, Celio was in a humor to desire a friend and to accept the first that offered. He felt a sense of pleasurable relief in being interrupted in his reflections, and his answer was frank and gay.

"Upon my editorial veracity, Captain Earnest, we are delighted at the opportunity of renewing our acquaintance with your royal person. How have the destinies comported themselves toward you since we last met?"

"Excellently well, sir. But you—what mighty question were you asking of the flag-stones when I overtook you? I doubt if you got a very clear answer."

"I? Nothing. I was only thinking."

"Mr. Celio, I believe," said a short, gruff personage, meeting the two gentlemen and stopping directly in front of our hero.

"Yes, sir—what is it you wish?" answered Celio, with a debtor's presentiment stealing like a cold chill over him.

"Messrs. Serge & Co. have a little bill against you which they have given me to collect. You are never at your lodgings—by the way, you've changed your boarding house since the first of May, I see—bad sign, young man—so I stopped you. I hope you have the amount about you."

The insolent, bantering tone of the man and the grinning sneer with which it was accompanied, roused the fiercest ire of Celio, notwithstanding that he was a debtor, and all debtors are and ought to be cowards to their creditors and *their* blood-hounds.

"Sir," said he, in a low, grating voice, whose edges grew jagged as they were forced through his shut teeth, "I have nothing to say about business to such an ill-bred ruffian as you; and if you don't stand aside and let me pass, I shall certainly knock you down."

"Oh, ho! Knock down a man for presenting a bill to you in the street because he can never find you at home—if you have got any home at all! There's a fine fashionable buck for you! Gentlemen, I call upon you for protection! I want this spark to pay his bill, and he threatens to knock me down. You who have shabby debtors stand by me, and we'll see if I can't plague it out of him."

It is as easy to make a little crowd in Broadway as to create a ripple in a swift current. We have seen five hundred eager spectators collected in half a minute to watch a fight between two negro boys—which turned out, after all, to be in sport; and the falling of an omnibus horse, or the discovery of an unusually large tobacco quid upon the pavement are sufficient to raise quite an extempore crowd. Already Celio and his companion were surrounded by a crowd every instant growing larger, while the irritated collector expounded his case in no very choice terms to the amusement and edification of the bystanders—for who refrains from laughing at the embarrassments or distresses of a stranger? and more especially, who would not assist in ridiculing a fellow guilty of being in debt? It was well for poor Celio that he got off without being suspended to an awning-post.

At first Celio's companion had fallen back a step or two; but learning the character of the scene, and seeing at a glance how matters stood, he stepped up to the incorrigible dun, and drawing both him and Celio through the crowd, quickly disappeared with them down the steps of an oyster-cellar. Celio, half dead with vexation, shame and rage, scarcely knew what transpired until he saw his acquaintance pull out his pocket book and ask the fellow to show his bill.

"Captain Earnest, what are you about? I charge you to do no such thing, sir! I have no means of re-paying you—the amount is a

large one—besides, I do not allow another to pay my debts. I insist—”

“Now my good fellow, do be easy one moment. I know all about that. I’ll apologize to you for my impertinence directly. Here, you rascal! give me the receipt, and here is your money. Now let me escort you up stairs.” And taking the delighted collector by the arm, he led him up the steps and launched him with a tremendous kick into the middle of the stream that ever pours its turbid tide along the two-shilling pavement. The fellow slid along several paces with the unexpected momentum, like a ship leaving the ways; and then recovering himself, he turned fiercely round upon his assailant with a most ludicrous scowl upon his parchment visage. But affairs were changed; he was now the laughed at. The passers grinned and pointed; a little negro showed ivory sufficient for a set of billiard-balls and chuckled as if he were about choking to death; Captain Earnest looked up and down the street as if nothing had happened; and the unlucky dun again set his face Grace Churchward, and was lost in the swiftly passing procession. He had got kicked, truly—but he had got his money!

Earnest now returned to his somewhat bewildered companion, whom he found apparently lost in examining the outline of a peculiarly well-developed female bust, lithographed and highly colored, and which hung in a gold frame against the back of a little recess into which the whole party had been crammed by Earnest upon first entering this oysterial abode.

“Well, how will you have them, fried or roasted? Or stay—we’ll have them broiled. And do you hear, boy, bring us some brandy and water, quick and strong.”

“Captain Earnest, I really take intense shame to myself for permitting things to go so far—so irretrievably far,” he added, hesitatingly; “for I do assure you upon my honor that I have not part of the money you have paid for me. Had I not been completely stupified by the strangeness of the encounter, and all together, I should have—but in truth I know not what to do.”

“Come now, that’s a capital speech, and exactly to the purpose; you shall go to Congress one of these days. But you are wasting your eloquence sadly, my dear Mr. Celio. It would require Mr. Webster himself, (but he is a great deal too wise to think of such a thing,) to convince me that I am wrong to lend a devilish good fellow a little money to help him out of an unpleasant predicament, when he happens to be short and I in funds. There now, let it all go; let us say no more about it.”

“But you will at least take my note. You smile, as if you deprecated so frail a security; but in such a case as this I feel sure that it will be ample. I could not sleep and reflect that an obligation of this nature, and so strangely conferred, remained unprovided for in some way. It shall be paid, and that soon.”

“Very well—yes, you’re right; so we’ll have it all arranged to—

morrow. Meanwhile, here comes the brandy and water. Come, help yourself, and let us have a little dish of talk while they are dishing up the oysters. The truth is, my dear friend, that I have been wishing to come across you for some time. I have a grand plan on foot for establishing a newspaper. Don't laugh; I know exactly what I am about, and that I shall succeed. Now unfortunately—you don't drink a drop, my dear Celio! Some sugar here, you rascal! and a bottle of champagne with the oysters,"—he added in a whisper to the waiter. "Unfortunately, I am but a dull clod at the pen. My thoughts come like Iago's, bird-line fashion, plucking away with them brains and all. Your sparkling, eager, exuberant vein is just what I want in my newspaper—will show everybody that we are in earnest—will carry off our new journal brilliantly. No sacrifice of principle—write what you please, only expose vice and humbug and hypocrisy. What do you say? Is it a bargain?"

Celio felt the old insatiable thirst of literary fame—partially smothered since the new development of his heart and passions under the influence of his two female friends—come back strongly upon him. It seemed to gush up from the very depths and fountains of his existence and send a thrill through his brain.

"I fear, Captain Earnest, that you have far overrated my poor abilities. But if they can be of any real service to you, I shall be only too happy—"

"Say no more, say no more; it is a bargain. From this moment our interests are one. And here come the oysters, broiled to a turn, I declare. Oysters are as dry as chips without champagne. Try a glass of this—red, by my beard! But no matter, it will answer in lieu of better. We must supply whatever of strength or sparkle it may lack from our own heads; while the merry liquid itself shall pay us back golden dreams to take to bed with us, and consecrate our pillows withal."

"You forget the reckoning to be paid in the morning with headaches," said Celio, at last fairly infected with the gay spirits of his companion, and regaining his usual ease and self-possession.

"No, by my faith! I never forgot one in my life; they won't be so easily got rid of. A bad head-ache is a thousand times worse than a poor relation or a tiresome mistress. You can cut the one and drown the other. But a head-ache—"

"Why, did you ever drown a mistress, Captain? That must be rare sport indeed."

"Not so rare as you may imagine," said Earnest, a cold dark gleam passing swiftly across his face, and vanishing in the shadows of the heavy curtains hanging before the little box in which they had installed themselves. "But come, let us drink. Here is champagne; indifferent enough, as I suspect, by the pretentious appearance of the bottle, as well as its too rosy hue; but better than your dull, heavy brandy. Here's to friendship, and confusion to love!"

"Love generally leads to confusion enough, I believe," returned Celio, suffering the sparkling beverage to play for a bright instant round his beautiful lips before he drank, and beginning to glow and thrill with the intense ecstasy which champagne always produced in his sensitive system. "But, Captain Earnest, were you really *in* earnest—by Jove, puns seem to be swimming about among the bubbles of this champagne!—were you really in earnest about your newspaper project? You know I was, as I may say, born in a press-room, and wrapped in the blanket from an imperial press. My first recollections of eating are connected with printers' pi, and my earliest lessons in religion refer back to the "hell" I used to have nailed to my case in the shape of an old shoe, into which all battered and broken type were indiscriminately thrown. What is the plan of your publication?"

"A capital one, my boy; one that has been well considered and cannot fail of success. I myself have some little experience in literary vagabondizing, and have had everything completed for several months past, waiting for the *right sort* of an editorial associate. They are plenty enough, heaven knows, and can be bought by the dozen for ten dollars and a treat at an oyster-cellar."

"As you think, perhaps, you are buying me, Captain Earnest," interrupted Celio, making a motion to rise.

"No, boy," replied Earnest, looking steadily into his eyes; "or I should not have told you to your face. Do you take me for a fool? No, no," he continued, resuming the same unreserved and even affectionate tone he had assumed in the beginning of the conversation; "No, you are of a different metal, or I am quite mistaken. I believe in my soul you are just the man I want. How do you stand in respect to society? Have you the *entree* to the fashionable circles?"

"Oh yes, thanks to my kind friend Mrs. Carleton; she takes me everywhere," said Celio, blushing, he knew not why, at the mention of her name.

The eye of Earnest rested upon Celio for a fleeting instant with snake-like keenness; then he observed carelessly,

"Oh, that set, hey? Yes, they are well enough in their way, but we will try and show you something a little different, by and by. But now for my plan; though I must first exact from you a promise, upon your honor, that you will never make any use of what I am going to disclose to you without my consent."

"I promise," said Celio, wondering to what all this led.

"Now then," continued Earnest, "we shall soon understand one another completely. You have, as you tell me, been educated in a printing-office, and are perfectly familiar with all the mysteries of newspaper-making, from political leaders to horrible accidents, aggravated seductions, and criticisms upon music and the fine arts. I am about now to convince you, my dear friend, that you know in reality nothing about newspapers—of their philosophy, the purposes for which they are to be used, the means of carrying them on,

and the power they can be made to exercise. I'll wager a dozen champagne, my honest young friend, that you imagine the principal objects of a newspaper to be to furnish sound and well-written disquisitions to its readers on the various topics of the day, and to supply the news-boys with extras containing the latest news by steam, ten minutes earlier than the rival establishment across the way. In addition to this, perhaps you would devote yourself to the interests of some party, and work early and late to advance this or that set of men to office, who will be morally certain to abandon you the moment you have made them successful. You are quite mistaken, my dear Celio. All these things are merely the incidental uses of newspapers. The true end and aim of the Press, that mighty engine, &c. &c.—by the way, you have drank nothing this half hour. Let's crack another bottle. Here's to the Press!"

"I can't refuse you to pledge you in that sentiment, Captain, but I tell you fairly this is the last. I do not bear much wine. Besides, your conversation is sparkling and stimulating enough."

"Thank you! I see you have learned how to be excellently polite. Well then, the great end and aim of the Press is to bring power and fortune to those who wield it. How many kinds of newspapers, now, do you enumerate?"

"Upon my word it is a branch of zoology in which I am not well studied. There are the religious papers, the political papers, the stupid papers, the evening papers—but these two are synonymous—the Sunday papers, and—I'm sure I don't know how many more."

"But, by Jove! I know exactly!" exclaimed Earnest, laughing. "There are just two kinds of newspapers, and no more—the successful and the unsuccessful. Now we will have nothing to do with the latter class. They are the convulsive gasps of disappointed ambition or starving honesty. The first thing to be accomplished in starting a new paper is notoriety. Now this I can acquire at once, for I have the means of obtaining the good editorial opinion of every paper in the city. This will cost perhaps five hundred dollars, as I mean to be very liberal, and buy every newspaper ninny at his own valuation. After the first *eclat* of our appearance, and we must be sure that our publication is able and healthy-looking, we can snap our fingers in the faces of the public and of our brother editors. If the latter abuse us, so much the better, the public will set it down for persecution. Now then, for our work. But I am boring you? We will take some other time to discuss these grave matters."

"You are cruel," eagerly cried Celio, "to pause an instant. Go on, if you love me!"

"I find you apt enough! Well, in the first place, of what is fashionable society composed in this good, democratic, and pious metropolis?"

"Nay, define it yourself."

"Well, then, listen! Of men who have made their fortunes by overreaching their less lucky neighbors—by gambling and false pre-

tences, which, practised on a small scale by a beggar to get bread, would send the perpetrator to state prison. By the most cold-blooded extortion and heartless usuries that would be repaid by a coat of tar and feathers by the mob if they were made known; by secret and illegal practices, such as lottery and other swindling of that nature; by speculations on the starvation of the poor; by banking without capital; by shaving or similar barbarous (no pun there, Celio!) operations upon the raw flesh of flayed victims. These men, having amassed by such means fortunes, or perhaps attained a show of fortune which gives them credit and answers every purpose—set themselves up, one after another, as aristocrats, leaders of fashion, founders of a new nobility. Their fathers made shoes, dug ditches, tended stables, sold pins, or made an honest livelihood in some such respectable occupation. But neither dares expose his neighbor's origin, for he is, alas! aware of his own; and exposure from *any* source would be certain ruin. An upstart aristocracy are your true storks—they kill their companions as fast as they are disabled. Not one of these who would not pay, and pay roundly, rather than be exposed. To be made a laughing-stock—have his flummery wife and daughters lose *caste*—be obliged to give up his front seat and his cushions at the Opera! Why, the very idea makes him crazy! Good Mr. Editor, dear Mr. Editor, only spare me, and anything you wish—here's my check! Mrs. Smith and the ladies have frequently wondered why you do not call. Come up next Thursday evening to our little *soiree*. We shall have Pico and a few musical friends! And then for the women. How many of the married ones who are not professed flirts and secret intrigantes, or who, mismatched in their youth, do not bestow the sighs and tears of guilty love upon some being who has crossed their ill-starred path like the realization of youth's golden dream? How many resist the fascination of the precious discovery that, amid all the folly and insanity and glittering heartlessness by which they are surrounded, they at last love and are beloved? You turn pale, Celio—ah, I see! You are bearing unconscious evidence of the truth of what I say. So you have already found your *eidolon*?"

"Captain Earnest, you take strange liberties."

"Now, *are* we sworn friends or are we not? Don't let us have any more of this nonsense. If I have unwittingly touched a sore place in your own experience, I beg your pardon sincerely. I don't seek to know your secrets. When you ask me for a confidant I shall be ready to become a true and faithful one. But you see at once, my dear friend, what a scope is here offered to the genius of an enterprising editor. Then there are rotten banks and insurance offices without number to be bolstered up or exposed, according to the liberality of their managers; unnecessary railroads to be advocated; all sorts of new and important schemes and inventions to be lauded or decried. All this done vigorously, boldly, and with an air of unflinching assurance and self-reliance, is worth at least as

much as the salary of the President. I have said nothing of the contributions to be levied on foreign fiddlers, dancers, singers, &c., &c., who come here to pick Yankee Doodle's pocket, and in return deserve their own to be gently squeezed; but you will at once see the advantage of these little perquisites. So, I hope you will be ready to commence soon. The season is ripe for our enterprize."

Celio was excited by the wine he had drank, by the incidents of the evening, and the rapid conversation of his companion, which flowed with resistless force and seemed to fuse everything within its influence into a stream of molten brightness, which he guided at will. Stinging under the inflictions, mortifications and privations of poverty—proud, high-spirited, ambitious—here was at once an opening for steady and profitable employment, which he felt it almost impossible to resist. Still, he was shocked at the bold profligacy of the plan of operations laid down by Earnest. He hesitated.

"I am afraid you are undergoing a vulgar qualm of conscience, Celio. Depend upon it, you shall never be called upon to say *any* thing you do not believe. I'll take all the sin, if there be any, upon my own shoulders. Besides, our paper will be just like all the others—all the successful ones, I mean. There's the ———, what is it but the organ of the stock-gamblers? a set of sportsmen infinitely more pernicious than the dealers in faro or the keepers of roulette tables. Read the leading columns of that paper, and you can tell to a certainty whether stocks are to go up or down that day. You think you are reading the most authentic particulars of the news from Europe. No such thing! You are only conning over an elaborate article prepared expressly for the purpose of raising or depressing the price of fancy stocks, according as the "bulls" or the "bears" have paid the editor most handsomely for his disinterested efforts in behalf of his country. The ———, as of course you know, has achieved an immense fortune by pretending to be one thing, and lying lustily but with a sanctimonious face for another. It leeches the dropsical and plethoric exchequers of our tract and bible missionary societies. The ———, I surely need not tell you, is made the mere tender of its proprietor's banking and other speculations; and by its judicious and uniform tameness it has become necessary as an advertising medium to all classes—a kind of central ground where chambermaids and quack doctors, seamstresses and young ladies in want of genteel board, meet without jostling—where everybody can see himself and his wants in wretched print for ten cents a line. But enough! Our paper shall be no vulgar puffing-machine; and, at any rate, I will lay no restraint whatever upon you."

"May I advocate what doctrine I please?"

"Yes, absolutely."

"Take care what you promise! For instance, I am a Transcendentalist."

"So am I."

"An Associationist."

"And I—belonging at present to group No. 1."

"A Swedenborgian."

"Ehem!"

"A Mesmerist."

"Oh, I go animal magnetism."

"An Abolitionist."

"Well. Anything more?"

"Yes—a Homœopathist."

"Capital!—I hate boluses. Go on."

"That will do for the present."

"A pretty fair list for a young gentleman of twenty, I confess. Pray where did you manage to pick up all these precious relics of the shipwrecked vessel "Progress?" But never mind—you shall have free swing in the columns of our new paper. You shall advocate anything you please—excepting always the abominable heresy of Priessnitz. Cold water is my abhorrence."

"Well, I consent—especially as I really am out of employment, in debt, and already under an obligation to you which I see no way of repaying."

"Nonsense! Since you have been out of the —— it has grown as stupid as a prayer-book. And speaking of money matters, here's a trifle to bind our bargain. Let us now go out and see that the town is all right side up, and to-morrow we will proceed to business. You will find I have got things already into a pretty fair state."

The two friends separated. Captain Earnest to look after the interests of the other branches of his somewhat diversified business operations, and Celio to a world of dreams, conjured up by the wand of the demon-genius, Ambition. An hour had fixed his destiny.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN THE VALUE OF A WIFE IN TIMES OF TROUBLE,
AND IN WHICH MR. VAN AUSTERCLAM DOES NOT CUT HIS THROAT.

The great house of Carleton & Co. was closed—but an ostentatious festoon of crape flapping against the shutters and concealing the enormous padlock that secured the iron bar, effectually checked the sneers, shrugs, and chuckling congratulations that otherwise would have made minor dealers happy. True, it was now the third day since the crape wreath had appeared on the door of the great

house. But some people prefer to keep their dead above ground as long as possible. It was doubtless a foolish superstition ; but in cases of this nature, public opinion has too much delicacy to interfere with the rights of individuals. The great house would be open to-morrow—there could be no doubt of it.

But there *was* doubt of it ; and in fact the doubt came true. The house was *not* opened the next day ; and by ten o'clock in the morning the whole street was engaged in deep discussion of the extraordinary circumstance. Many began now openly to sneer and shrug their shoulders, while all felt certain forebodings which none as yet found courage to express in words. A few grew uneasy ; and when any one whispered in their hearing that the crape was all gammon, and the whole affair a trick got up to enable old Carleton to get off, they turned pale and red by turns, and began talking eagerly and wildly of indifferent subjects.

"Did you see how white old Sevins got about the gills, when I expressed my suspicions about this being all a trick ?" inquired Mr. Pipson in a whisper, to his neighbor.

"Yes—but what then ? You don't suppose that, even if there is a trick, Sevins has been privy to it ?"

"Privy to it ! No indeed ! But can't you see ? He's been endorsing for Carleton & Co. lately, until he has got in up to the eyes. If Carleton goes—or is gone—Sevins and half-a-dozen others I see over there will follow in less than ten days."

"But has any of Carleton & Co's. paper been protested ?"

"None that I can hear of ; but I have ascertained that there is a pretty large show of drafts on Philadelphia come back for non-acceptance ; and if they are not paid to-day, the thing is out."

"Is that really so ? You astonish me. What bank, did you say, had those drafts ?"

"The Phenix—they are only for sixty thousand," continued Pipson, in a loud and mocking tone, as his friend rushed frantically down the street, as if he had suddenly caught sight of a mad bull coming directly at him.

"Ho, ho, ho !" chuckled the other, in a low and peculiar voice, as he put the palms of his hands together and placing the backs between his knees, seemed endeavoring to extract a few drops of palm oil, by compound pressure. "He ! he ! he ! How nicely the old fellow has managed ! I predict some smashing times in the street before the moon sheds her skin." Having thus given vent to that most amiable of all human qualities—gratification at the misfortunes of others—Mr. Job Pipson, the shrewd money-broker, selected a five-cent piece from his clinking purse, and depositing it in his right-hand vest pocket, went to the Exchange Coffee House and called for six-pence worth of oysters for lunch.

The individual who had manifested so much excitement at hearing the Phenix Bank and the sixty thousand dollars of protested drafts mentioned, flew down the street and rushed into the Bank in a state

of phrenzy. A little crowd was gathered round the counter in front of the receiving teller, each patiently waiting his turn. The newcomer, however, elbowed them unceremoniously aside, and leaning over the counter, muttered.—

“Is it true, then?—are they protested?”

“Good morning, Mr. Van Austerclam—very happy to see you,” responded the teller without raising his busy eyes; “I will attend to you in a few minutes. Now Mr. Nathans, the check, as you say, was four thousand six hundred and”—

“But I must know this instant!” almost screamed the usually phlegmatic Mr. Van Austerclam. “My life depends upon it, I tell you.”

A sincere excitement always overawes those who happen to be cool, and the little knot of customers instinctively gave way, leaving Van Austerclam and the teller face to face across the counter.

“What were you inquiring about, Mr. Van Austerclam? and in what can I serve you?”

“Tell me instantly, have the drafts of Carleton & Co., come back for non-acceptance?”

The teller turned to his desk, and taking down a book half filled with papers, began leisurely to look them over, while the eyes of his visitor glared like those of a gambler whose last stake was dancing on the engulfing wave of fortune, ready to disappear forever.

“I find, sir,” at length said the teller, in a voice of the calmest indifference, “that two sight drafts of Carleton & Co., for sixty thousand dollars, endorsed by you, came back last evening for non-acceptance, and that you therefore are liable for the amount.”

Van Austerclam stood for a moment as if transfixed into the statue of despair; then clenching his hands over his forehead, as if to shut out some horrid sight, he muttered between his set teeth, “Lost, lost, and ruined forever!” and passed with funeral step from the bank.

It was now high tide in the street, and the walks were crowded with anxious looking and haggard men, running about eagerly from cellar to cellar and bank to bank, armed with memorandum-books or little slips of papers, and seeming as if they had just escaped from a herd of people driven by a mad dog. Every window displayed in tempting profusion glittering heaps of gold or carelessly-disposed handfulls of bank bills, as if to mock the necessities of those outside who famished and thirsted for the wherewithal to meet requisitions more imperative than the want of daily bread.

But Van Austerclam saw nothing of the game playing before him. His stake was played out and he had no further interest in any thing he saw. The scene in which he had been so long an actor had passed away from him as completely as though it existed not. His being was elsewhere, was on the verge of an abyss, endeavoring in vain to escape the contemplation of its own destruction. Stalking moodily through the crowd, he pursued his way up Broadway, ap-

parently unconscious of the throng which swept by him in either direction. Turning down one of the splendidly-built streets in the upper part of the city, he entered a magnificent house, and was met in the hall by a coarse, tawdry-looking woman, enveloped in a costly cachemire and surmounted by a gay bonnet whence swept a pennant of gaudy-colored flowers.

"So, Mr. Van Austerclam, you have come home at last, after keeping me and the girls waiting full two hours, when all the best things at Stewart's will be taken up, and the side-walk occupied with carriages, so that we can't get within a mile of the entrance. Where's the money?"

"Hav't got it!" growled the gentleman, and passed up stairs.

The lady hesitated a moment, undecided whether to go into hysterics over such astounding conduct on the part of the most obedient of husbands, or to follow him and demand an explanation. Like a shrewd and sensible woman as she was, she adopted the latter course.

She was not an instant too soon. As she burst open her husband's study door, he was standing in the middle of the room with a naked razor in his hand and the devil peeping out laughingly from his wild eyes.

"Wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Van Austerclam, fury flashing from her very handsome and imperial eyes; "how dare you go to commit suicide and leave me and our children alone in the wide world without protection! I s'pose you've been dabbling in them nasty copper-stocks again and lost your money. I wish they were all copper-heads to bite every body that meddled with 'em."

The detected and guilty man submitted meekly to the conjugal rebuke, and permitted his wife to draw from him, though not without a great deal of difficulty, the secret of his loss by the drafts of Carleton & Co. She was a woman of coarse but strong mind, destitute of conscience as of delicacy and feeling; and her advice was that Van Austerclam should forge checks on houses that were yet safe, to the amount of his losses by Carleton & Co., and then abscond. It will perhaps be satisfactory to the reader to know that this advice was punctually followed by the obedient Van Austerclam, and thirty thousand dollars deposited with the amiable wife, while the husband got safely on board the steamer for Europe.

Doubtless many of them will still remember the announcement in the daily papers of the sudden disappearance of Mr. Van Austerclam, to the amazement of the public in general and his creditors in particular. With their usual disposition for embellishing every thing with "rich licks," the conscientious reporters took care to state that Mr. Van Austerclam took a female "*compagnon du voyage*," (all the editors understand French) with him. But a "Disinterested Friend," published an indignant denial the next morning, at the same time stating that Mr. Van Austerclam would return in the spring—and that is the last we have heard about the matter.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. JOHN PIPSON CONTINUES HIS "OPERATIONS." AN AVOWAL AND A FUNERAL ENLIVENED WITH A LITTLE LAW BUSINESS.

The sedate and amiable Mr. Pipson, after punishing his short sixpence worth of oysters, walked, (to put himself into an agitation,) briskly to the house of Mr. Carleton, and rang gently, the bell-handle being soothed with crape. After several moments, the door was noiselessly opened by a sleek and shining negro waiter, who held a white handkerchief to his eyes, and blubbered as Mr. Pipson passed by him into the parlor.—Here all was cold, gloomy and desolate. It was yet early summer, and the air, impregnated with the perfume of the conservatory, was faint and heavy. Nearly all the furniture had been removed from the room; and supported by chairs against the wall near the door, was a coffin. The folding-doors were nearly closed, but through the crevice between them came that most dismal of all human sounds, the sobbing of woman for the dead. Pipson approached the coffin and gazed for a moment, with an indefinable expression, upon the face of the corpse. It was that of an old man, who must have struggled hard, for the features were still wreathed with ghastly wrinkles, grown marble beneath the blue fingers of death. With something between a shrug of pity and a gesture of contempt, Pipson moved from the coffin, and opening the folding-door, passed into the back parlor. A white hand was held out to him, but its owner did not raise her face from the arm of the sofa, where it was buried in a drooping handkerchief. By the lady's side, her face buried in the folds of her black dress, leaned a young girl. Pipson respectfully took the hand held out to him, and held it in one of his own, while with the other he drew a chair close to the sofa and sat down, sighing deeply. Thus passed many minutes in silence, broken only by the calm sobbing of the lady and the spasmodic weeping of the girl. At length the lady said :

"This is kind, very kind of you, Mr. Pipson, to visit us in our heavy hour of affliction. But all hours must henceforth be so to us."

"My dear friend, I know you too well to attempt offering any diversion to your overwhelming sorrows—they become your great affliction, and I would not see them less. But trust me that time, which blunts the keenest sensibilities of life, conquers even the horror of death. By and by your excellent reason will again resume her sway, and then you will thank the Creator for taking your beloved husband to his rest—After all, our grief for the dead is a too selfish sorrow. Life is not so desirable a boon."

"You speak well, sir—you who have never had your heart-strings broken by being torn from one you loved better than life itself."

Pipson started and turned pale for an instant; and the white hand

he had still continued to hold fell nerveless and flexible upon the night-like robes of the mourning lady.

"Madam," said he at length, but he spoke slowly and as if with difficulty, "it is not for mortals to read each other's hearts. It is true I have no earthly ties now—but I loved once, and was rejected. That was bitterer far than death."

She felt the terrible insult of these words, and looked up through her tears, calmly, almost sternly, yet very sadly. "And is it," said she, "at such a moment as this, that for the first time in so many years, Mr. Pipson forgets himself and his promise to be my friend? Cruel! cruel!"

"And so I am, as you shall still confess, Madam—your true and unselfish friend, if I know my own heart. But you yourself recalled a memory which still stings me to the soul. Yet I was wrong; you must forgive me. They say that a friend always brings bad news; and if that is true I shall be esteemed one. I know you will forgive the apparent untimeliness of what I am going to communicate. It is urgent, and will admit of no delay. Rouse yourself and recall all your strength of mind—for you will need it. Yet it is better that the news should come from a devoted friend than to be first heard from careless and perhaps insulting lips."

She looked up with wild and wondering eyes. "What do you mean? Go on—I listen."

"It is my melancholy duty to inform you that Mr. Carleton, whose sudden death we are now mourning, had been for several months engaged deeply and desperately in speculations, all of which turned our disastrously, and he was utterly and irretrievably ruined. I know how proud and honorable a heart he had; and I can scarcely doubt that the knowledge of this frightful fact exerted a great influence in bringing on the sudden attack which carried him away."

Mrs. Carleton remained for several minutes in utter silence—not even her breathing, but now so sobbing and convulsive, could be heard. She had leaned back on the sofa, and her face grew white and hard as marble. Pipson thought she had fainted; and Nina, who had been listening with a look of mingled terror and amazement sprang to Mrs. Carleton's side, and clasping her head caressingly, exclaimed—

"Mama, mama, speak to me!"

The lady gently returned the embrace of the beautiful girl; and whispering a few words in her ear, rose with dignity, and stood directly in front of Pipson. The girl glided silently from the room; and then Mrs. Carleton spoke.

"Mr. Pipson," said she, slowly and sadly, yet with a kind of proud bitterness, "you have chosen an unfortunate time to make your cruel announcement. I see by the ill-suppressed joy in your eyes that what you have said of Mr. Carleton's affairs is true, and that I am a beggar."

"Oh, madam, how can you use such a word, while I——"

"Nay, interrupt me not. I know you, and can guess your errand. My noble and unsuspecting husband had, during his late ill health, entrusted much of his business to your hands, and it would be strange if you had not provided for establishing your own power in this dreadful extremity. Tell me, then, now, even now, in the presence of my yet unburied husband and protector, what are *your* claims. Let me know the extent of my situation at once, and let all the terrors and calamities of my life be crowded into this miserable hour."

"My dear Mrs. Carleton," said Mr. Pipson, in the same whining, insolent tone he used when depreciating the value of a note, he was about shaving—"you take altogether too serious a view of the subject. It is true that my respected and lamented friend Mr. Carleton did, before his death, borrow a considerable sum of money from me, for which he gave me what is vulgarly termed a chattel mortgage on his furniture—the house and the rest of the property having been previously mortgaged to a house that is now taking steps to foreclose and enter upon possession. But perhaps we had better postpone the discussion of this subject for the present. Some other time——"

"No, no—now; at once and forever. I could not endure to live one day in suspense as to my fate. What is the amount of this claim? Does it cover all?"

"To tell you the truth, my dear Mrs. Carleton, it does. But I have no doubt we shall be able to manage the affair to our mutual satisfaction. I have a proposal to make, which I think you cannot, upon due reflection, but find agreeable and every way conducive to your best interests."

The haughty woman, whose sense of the insulting character of this visit had for the moment almost triumphed over her grief, rose suddenly as if about to put an end to the interview, but checking herself, as by a master-effort, she resumed her seat, saying simply—

"Well, Mr. Pipson, what is your proposal?"

"Ah, now you are yourself again, my dear madam, and your usual good sense becomes distinguished. I was about respectfully and in the most delicate manner to suggest that this matter can be at once and satisfactorily arranged. This house and furniture are still yours, madam. I have possessed myself of the mortgage on the house, and you need fear no disturbance from any quarter. I beg you to consider it as entirely your own as ever."

Mrs. Carleton looked at the man with her large, clear eyes, whose pure light seemed to penetrate to Mr. Pipson's very soul—for he colored and turned uneasily in his chair, and I believe absolutely trembled with some indefinable emotion.

"And what is the condition of this unlooked for and undeserved goodness, Mr. Pipson?"

"Nay, madam—I did not intend to speak of that at present—indeed, not for a very long time. But you know that—that is, how much—I have ever loved you. No, by heaven!" and he changed his tone; and seeming carried away by some irresistible excitement,

which for the instant made him almost beautiful, he suddenly and passionately threw himself at the lady's feet. "No, by heaven, Adelaide!" cried he, in piercing accents, like those of a soul pleading its admission to heaven, "you do not and cannot know how I love and worship you. This hour has been the one dream of my life. For it I have patiently waited through years of torture and a hell of jealous pangs. For this I have toiled and striven and hardened my heart to all the world, and amassed wealth—for I am rich, oh, Adelaide! rich beyond your wildest dreams. And see—now I lay it all before you, and give you the means for shining in unrivaled splendor in the world that worships you. Take time to think, dear Adelaide—I ask nothing now. Your grief is sacred, and I would not have disturbed it but at your command. Oh, tell me—am I to die or am I to live? Give me one ray of hope!"

Mrs. Carleton listened to this astounding and audacious declaration with the listless helplessness of one already overwrought in heart and brain with sorrowful excitement, and utterly crushed by the weights of some new and unexpected blow. When Pipson had finished, he looked up from the groveling attitude into which he had thrown himself, and almost began to hope—so slowly did she recover herself.

At length she rose; and grasping Mr. Pipson by the shoulder, with a strength that made him shrink, she led him through the folding doors and up to the very coffin of her dead husband. She pointed steadily to the face of the corpse, and looking Pipson full in eyes, said, very slowly and solemnly—

"Mr. Pipson, by the soul of that noble man, whose memory you have but now so foully outraged, and by the grave that soon is to enclose him, I swear to you that I utterly loathe and hate you—that I have ever suspected you of being that which I now know you—a miserable, pitiable wretch. Go! To-day I attend my husband's body to its final resting place: to-morrow morning you may take peaceable possession of *your* house. Go!" and she made an imperious motion with her arm towards the door; while her eyes fell sadly upon the dead face in the coffin, and an expression of tenderness and celestial sorrow gradually stole over her beautiful features.

Mr. Pipson did not linger; but as he passed out of the room he bestowed one glance upon the apparently unconscious lady, into which so much of rage, malignity and hatred were concentrated that she seemed to *feel* it and to grow sick beneath its deadly influence. And yet, one look or accent of love would have changed that demon into the gentlest and tenderest of human beings—for he loved and worshipped, in sincerity and truth.

Long and earnestly gazed that beautiful living woman upon the ghastly dead corpse that lay there so quietly before her; until at last tears came swiftly brimming into her eyes and raining upon her husband's face.

"Noble soul," said she, in a low and prayerful voice, "look down upon her whom thou lovedst so well, and forgive her that she was so unworthy of thee!"

Now the friends began to come in, and the sad, desolate ostentation of conventional grief commenced—to me the mournfulest and most painful sorrow of all that is entailed by death. Indeed, I have from childhood ceased to mourn for those who die. The grave is none the less the gate to a fairer and more harmonious world, because my eyes are not fine and clear enough to penetrate beyond its darkness. I mourn only for the living who live unloved. For in heaven even they will meet their congenial souls—and it is so long and dreary waiting!

But the gloomy pageant came and went, and was over. The pale and weeping widow had borne herself calmly and bravely through all the accumulated trials pressed into the last few days—but now her stout heart had given way, and she flung herself prone upon her bed, and groaned aloud in the greatness of her agony. The bitterness of death and life, mingled to poison in her heart, flowed forth in tears and passionate exclamations of childlike despair.

Adelaide Carleton, however, was not a nature long to succumb or shrink appalled beneath the severest trial. Her aspiring soul had long since learned to comprehend the universal and almost hopeless disorder that reigns throughout the earth, and to feel that happiness was only to be looked for in another existence, while mankind continued blind and selfish here. She therefore accepted the part allotted her, with cheerful resignation.

CHAPTER IX.

A FIGHT WITH THE TIGER.—HOW TO TAME WILD ANIMALS, WITH A BRIEF LESSON ON BETTING AT FARO.

It was now somewhat after midnight.. The sky had clouded over and a thunder-storm was germinating in the far south-west, sending flashes of incipient vitality occasionally across the sky, like the glances of an eye looking forth to survey the scene upon which it is about to enter. From the house of Madame Persiflage, Captain Earnest and Merivale proceeded arm in arm down Broadway, both preserving an unbroken silence; for the scene of the last few hours had been of too exciting a character, and had left too vivid an impression on the minds of the young men to allow them a disposition to speak.

Passing the end of the Park and by the City Hall gate, they turned down a short broad street lined on either side with trees, and

terminating in a beautiful green park, upon which the night rested with that appearance of infinite quiet and repose so characteristic of a forest in the dark. A few steps from Broadway brought them to a well-built aristocratic-looking mansion, up the steps of which Earnest sprang and touched the bell. It was answered directly, and a well-dressed civil-looking yellow man made his appearance, requesting to know the gentlemen's business. He instantly, however, recognized Earnest, and making a low bow, suffered both him and his friend to pass in without further obstruction. The front parlor, into which the friends entered, was fitted up in a style of quiet but luxurious elegance, the wall being adorned with pictures, many of them of genuine value and evidently from the pencils of masters in their art. On the mantel stood a profusion of those exquisite filagree ornaments, for which the Parisian artizans are so celebrated, interspersed with statuettes artistically fashioned, and retaining much of the indescribable genius with which the sculptor knows how to invest the marble.

But the most striking establishment of this spacious and elegant apartment was a magnificently-appointed table, filling two-thirds of the centre of the room, and loaded with a wonderful variety of the choicest and most delicate dishes, which the genius of French cookery had summoned from the common-place materials of the grocery and butcher's stall. Everything was arranged with the eye of an artist, and with a view to symmetry and picturesqueness of effect that is so rarely seen and so much talked about. It was, in short, the science of eating reduced to a beautiful poem. Around this table at irregular intervals were seated some half-dozen individuals of various styles of face, figure, dress and general appearance. All however were evidently of the better classes of society, and an air of ease and well-bred politeness was observable in each. They appeared to be every one eating on his own hook, as none of the usual conventionalities of the dining-table were observed, and each guest nodded to the waiter and pointed quietly to whatever he required. Wines there were of every variety and in the greatest abundance, from the grateful and delicately voluptuous Champagne, gleaming like bottled sunshine through its dark green prison, to the stout and stalwart Port, squaring itself, John-Bullwise, upon its broad feet, and rubbing complacently its full round belly.

Without more than exchanging the merest ordinary civilities with the guests in the room, Captain Earnest and his friend seated themselves without ceremony at the table, and by way of passing the time and showing that they were familiar with the place, pretended to eat, although, as may well be supposed, their appetites were none of the keenest. After having popped a bottle of Renauk & François Champagne, a portion of which they sipped very leisurely, they arose and sauntered into the other parlor, where a group of some thirty or forty individuals was gathered about a "long low black" table, in the centre of which was a cloth

containing, fastened by the backs, all the cards of the "full deck." At one end of the table, sat a little crooked man with fingers like eagle's claws, who held a tin box before him, from which he mysteriously slipped one card at a time, lying it on one of the two piles which grew impartially by alternate distribution beneath his hand. At the dealing of each card a slight commotion went round the table, and a great change of places was observed among sundry heaps of large ivory buttons—some white, some red—lying promiscuously about on the stationary cards on the table. No money was seen, except now and then when one of the players became "broke," and passed a V or an X to the dealer, receiving its equivalent in buttons. The white ones stood for a dollar a piece, and the red ones five, so that a man might readily lose or win a handsome sum of money in a short time, by this dangerous species of the game of button.

Noiselessly and earnestly the game went on—the pallid, eager, dull, beaming, reckless and despairing faces gathered round the table, presenting a panorama of human passions painful yet interesting to contemplate. This is the inner shrine of the temple of Mammon, and its devotees are actuated solely by the simple, undisguised, almost demoniac love of money. No scene nor phase of unadulterated human selfishness is below or beyond this. The robber who stabs his victim to get at his pocket, the incendiary who fires a city in the hope of spoils, is not more the slave of lustful gold, than that gray-headed sinner, or that bright-eyed, nervous youth who stands leaning over the faro table watching every card as if the destiny of his immortal soul hung—and so perhaps it does—upon the issue.

For some time Earnest and his friend watched the game slightly and without any intention to mingle in it. They had purposely kept themselves at the outer edge of the circle surrounding the table, and Earnest had not been recognized, though he was evidently at home in the house and must have been well known there. When they first entered, the game did not seem to be in one of its more interesting phases, the bets being unusually light, and the winnings and losings being distributed with a smile and a gesture of indifference, which seemed to say: This is mere child's play; we are waiting for something exciting to turn up. In a few hours, Earnest and Merivale had simultaneously their attention drawn to a handsome and intelligent young man, evidently a novice in the business, and who laid down his stakes with an air of trembling uncertainty, and watched the dealing of the cards with a feverish anxiety, which, to the practised eye of Captain Earnest, told plainly of the tempted youth sporting with money not his own, and probably risking his honor and virtue in the desperate attempt to retrieve some fearful loss, the contemplation of which made his soul shudder.

Here, O young man! whosoever thou art, who hast taken the first step in that worst and most awful crime of gambling, pause and

listen! It is not yet too late. There is a way and a sure way in which thou canst roll from thy heart the horrid load of guilt and humiliation and despair that is crushing thee to the earth. Thou hast fallen. Thou hast wasted not merely that which was thine own, but hast already added to the crime of gambling that of treachery and fraud upon thy employer. Yet, for all that, it is not too late. Another day, another hour, another moment, and perhaps it will be too late forever in this world. Now thy destiny is yet in thine own hands. Oh! as thou regardest thy soul's peace, thy mother's pangs, thy father's blessing, and thy future salvation, pause and listen to my advice. The hope of better luck by which to retrieve that which you have lost is utterly, utterly futile. Never indulge it for a second. It will lead to irretrievable ruin and dismay. The wily cheats who have brought you thus far upon the road of guilt have accomplished their end. They have occasionally permitted you perhaps to win. It was not you who won, it was simply they who suffered it. But the purpose of their doing so is now accomplished; they feel sure that the fish is caught: that the barb is deep through and through his vitals, and all occasion for further dissimulation is over. Every dollar you now risk—risk, did I say? it is not risk—every dollar you now lay upon that table is the offering of a fool, to a remorseless, unscrupulous gang of robbers, who so far from being pacified by the tributes of their disciples and victims, only feel their appetite increase by what it feeds on. Those cards in that innocent looking tin-box are the mere instruments upon which that cunning knave plays a certain and infallible tune. Not more completely under the guidance of his subtle fingers and the control of his creative genius is the violin of the Norwegian enchanter than that little box and those square slips of paper are under the perfect management of the brain and thumb and finger of that little crooked man with hands like eagle's talons, who sits crouched in his wide leathern chair at the head of the table.

But I said that you may yet be saved. Quit this poisonous place and go to your sleepless couch; when the morning wakes find out your wronged and defrauded employer; tell him plainly, frankly, calmly, all; keep nothing from him; disguise nothing, neither your temptation, nor your weakness, nor your dreadful fall. If he be not the last man of a thousand men he will forgive you, receive you back into his confidence, trust you and love you more than ever; because he will feel that such is the course dictated not merely by humanity, but by good policy. Now indeed he knows you—your weakness and your strength. For the strength which can confess a criminal act is more than a match for the weakness which led you to commit it. But even should your reception be different, should you be cast off and abandoned, you need not despair. You have lost but one friend whom you no longer deserved, and you should accept that fate patiently as a feeble punishment for a monstrous crime, and struggle patiently and cheerfully and hopefully for a better

time when you may recommence the game of life under fairer skies and more favorable auspices. The lesson you have learned is worth more than place or salary, or friends, or even reputation—for it has taught you to know and be master of yourself.

Gradually, the young man whom Earnest and his friend had been watching grew evidently more excited, and increased the amount of his stakes at every loss. He was now betting what is called heavily—that is, staking from ten to fifty and a hundred dollars upon a card; and one could see by the wavering glimmer of his eye and the frightful, vacant look, like a temporary insanity, that now and then shot across his face, that he was losing all control of himself, and becoming reckless under the lashing of some ungovernable emotion. The fiend of gambling was roused from the ocean of his soul, and his whole being foamed and roared in the agony of the furious storm. It was evident that the game he was playing could not last long; and as he held a hundred dollar bill in his hand ready to lay it upon the table, Earnest quietly moved round the circle and whispered a word in the young man's ear. He paused a moment, drew back his hand, passed the back of it across his brow, and then laid down his money upon an entirely different part of the table from that on which he had been operating during the whole evening.

"Ace, red," said the little crooked man, in a dry, monotonous, husky voice, and the young man had won! He looked across the table and caught the eye of Earnest fastened intently upon his. Seeming to understand that he had found an unexpected friend who could relieve him from his horrible position, a light broke over his countenance and he appeared instinctively to comprehend what Earnest wished to convey to him. He, therefore, as if in obedience to the intimation he had received, withdrew his original stake, suffering that which he had won to remain upon the same card.

"Ace, red," said the dealer, in the same dry, husky, monotonous tone: and the stranger had won again!

By this time it was evident to the crowd of spectators, most of whom had now ceased to bet and were watching the development of the well-known game, which they saw on foot, of plucking a new pigeon, that something was going forward, "not contained in the small bills," and a marked sensation went through the crowd. The dealer, too, seemed to have had some vitality infused into his withered frame, and looking up from his employment and casting a rapid eye round the table, he instantly recognized the calm, placid face of Earnest, who seemed to be merely looking on, an unconscious spectator of the scene.

But the dealer knew better; and gathering up his buttons and bank bills and gold, he thrust them into a little tin safe, which he locked, and taking it in his hand, said:

"The game, gentlemen, is discontinued for this evening."

"How is this, sir?" impatiently exclaimed the young gambler in

whose favor luck seemed to be about turning. "I demand my revenge. I have lost nearly ten thousand dollars at this bank the last three evenings. I demand of you, gentlemen, whether I have not a right that the game should be continued."

"Yes, yes, yes, by all means; that is only fair," was muttered by several voices round the table.

"Gentlemen," said the dealer, rising and sending a keen, steel-like glance round the circle, "I suppose you will permit us to manage our business in our own way. The game is discontinued for this evening," and he bowed politely and was about to leave the room.

He had not more than half reached the door, however, before the hand of Merivale was lightly yet firmly laid upon the little man's shoulder. "I think," said he, "that you must be mistaken, or, perhaps, joking. It surely cannot be your intention to deprive the company of the pleasure of a quiet game so early in the evening."

The man answered him gruffly, "No more play to-night."

"But I say there is play to-night," replied Merivale slowly, but a little fiercely; "and look well to yourself that the game that is to be played shall not be something a little less agreeable, perhaps, than faro. Do you mark me?"

"Who are you?" inquired the dealer, in a voice half insolence and half trepidation.

"I am a man and a gentleman, I hope; but that can be nothing to you. What I demand is that you resume your seat at that table and recommence your game."

"You demand?"

"Yes, I demand; and see that you obey, and that instantly."

The man hesitated a moment and looked round the room as if in search of his associates or some description of assistance, and then made a sudden and quick movement as if to escape the grasp of his uncomfortable acquaintance. But the latter was out of the question. It would be as easy for the iron to escape the vice in which it is held. After a moment of further hesitation, he looked up and saw the attention of the whole company directed upon him, and saw also that the public opinion of the place was against him. He likewise, at the same moment, encountered the impassive eye of Earnest fixed upon him with an expression which seemed at once to settle the question. He limped back to the table and the game was resumed.

In the changing of places incident to this little interruption, Earnest had accidentally placed himself beside the young gambler, who furtively glanced at him before making each bet, and seemed so well to divine what Earnest would have told him that he continued to win stake after stake, until a buzz and a murmur ran round the room that the bank was in danger. The excitement at the table was tremendous, and it became almost actually sublime to watch the play of the selfish human passions wreaking themselves in sympathy over the game played by another. There is a community of feeling as well as of interest among the injured—such all the frequenters of

the gambling-table are—which leads them to hail with inexpressible joy any slight reverse which the bank may encounter. With them, as with the lamented Gen. Jackson, the bank is a “monster” beneath whose teeth and claws they themselves have frequently and deeply suffered. And therefore it is an indescribable gratification to see it receive now and then a hearty blow from some luckier antagonist. The bank, too, usually so aristocratic and so insolent, like most other banks, when it begins to feel the consequences of a bad run of luck, grows suddenly paralysed and seems to be no longer able to make use of even its most reliable and oft-tried resources. It was in vain that the dealer shuffled and re-shuffled, and cut and cut again, and adjusted the little mysterious springs and contrivances of his tin box—in vain he swore at the cards and called for new packs. Package after package was opened, yet all turned out exactly alike. The devil seemed for once to have deserted his favorite child in his darling profession. And as the clock in old St. Paul’s spire tolled three, the young gambler’s eye lit with pride and triumph, and brimming over with an inexpressible gratitude beautiful to behold, he announced that his losses were recovered and that he was a man again. He turned round to thank his guardian spirit who had rescued him from perdition. But Earnest, simply whispering in his ear: “If you are not the vilest and most ungrateful of men, you will never gamble more,” pressed his hand kindly and instantly departed. Merivale followed, and the two friends sought their lodgings.

CHAPTER X.

REFLECTIONS—A FAIR WARNING TO THOSE WHO WISH TO SKIP.

While they sleep, perhaps we cannot do our readers a greater favor, or at least such of them as have done us the honor to take an interest in the destiny and history of our characters, than to give some account of Earnest and Merivale and state some of the reasons and objects of their appearance in the conduct of our story.—They were brothers who in early life had been powerfully attracted by a mutual impulse to metaphysical and philosophical studies. Both mingled in a remarkable degree the practical and speculative. Their father died while they were still quite young, and they found themselves the joint owners of an immense estate. With the golden enthusiasm and hopeful trust in men and human destiny, which are the most precious endowments of life—too precious to outlast in the majority of men the earliest youth—they determined and solemnly pledged themselves

to each other to devote their lives and fortunes to meliorating the condition of their fellow-creatures and to testing practically their various theories of social improvement. Society was the theme which they accepted as their life's study ; and to the prosecution of their researches they brought hearts of the strongest and purest, intellects of the keenest, and a will and energy which, as the result will show, were firm and indomitable as a God's. There is something in the conception of such a life as this, thus voluntarily offered up upon the altar of mankind, more beautiful, more sublime, than the wildest dreams of the poet or the greatest imaginings of the artist. On what canvass or on what marble, within the pages of what book, or amid the scenes of what poetic drama, is there embodied any thing half so noble, so utterly human and so truly Godlike, as these two brothers in their beautiful and celestial sympathy, willingly devoting themselves heart, soul and fortune, to the most chivalrous vow that ever passed mortal lips or made throb a human heart ? Had the drama or the pages of our imaginative literature furnished to the world a few models of real practical nobility, a few beau ideal upon which admiring gaze of the world might be fixed, not as upon a star which cannot be approached, but as upon something great, good and noble, that all might equal or somewhat at least resemble, how pointless would fall the sneers of the bigot, the anathemas of the enthusiast, or even the sincere denunciations of the ignorant moralist who see in the present forms of art but the embodiment of effeminate and licentious ideas or the last sublimation and transmutation into the semblance of good, of the most questionable of sentiments and equivocal principles ?

It is not our purpose, at present, to go into a detailed history of the lives and adventures of either Captain Earnest or his brother, who bore the name of Merivale. These will be sufficiently developed in the future course of our history. It is enough that we say here that notwithstanding the mysterious scenes in which we have met our hero, Captain Earnest, and the very questionable characters by whom he has been for the most part surrounded and with whom he is evidently upon the best of terms, yet never has he for an instant faltered from his real purpose ; never failed in word or deed in this sworn duty to humanity ; never sullied the purity of his noble nature ; and although he may have committed errors, and sometimes greivous ones, of judgment and of policy, yet we assure the reader that he, as well as ourself, will be satisfied with the entire career and the final achievements of this strange yet natural character.

As to Merivale, his nature was by no means so cabalistic as that of his elder brother. He was all frankness and sunshine and transparency. His eyes were windows, whenceforth freely looked his soul. His life was but the mirror of his heart, and he went straight on in the accomplishment of his objects, neither mingled with the dark intrigues of vice, seeking to give their current a higher and purer direction, nor lowering himself to the level of those he would reform, trusting to his own strength to raise them all up again.

As was natural to a character of this description, he had for the most part confined himself to life as it is developed in the country. His own organization drew him powerfully to rural scenes, where alone he seemed to breathe freely; for he said that there was something in the atmosphere of a city which seemed not only to choke up his lungs but to suffocate the very soul within him. And so it is. There can be not a doubt that the poisonous exhalations of a large city correspond not merely by accident but upon immutable mathematical and philosophical principles with the moral miasmas which are generated by its hot contacts and unnatural struggles. It is not too much to believe, for one who has dared to study, think and reason for himself, that the diseases of civilization correspond to its crimes, and that the awful epidemics which at certain intervals sweep over the face of society, laying low thousands of the good and fair as well as the vile and wretched, are the physical retributions for the mass of crime and fraud and oppression and licentiousness which pervade all ranks and every walk of life. The geologists have satisfactorily proved that the shell of the earth in the early period of its escapes from incandescence was inhabited by gigantic monsters too formless, chaotic and horrible to be now even conceived of, and that the character of the animals upon the surface of the earth became more and more refined as the earth itself condensed and approximated to its porcelain consistence. And there are not wanting eminent and intellectual men in the present enlightened era who believe that this mutual refinement of earth and animal will proceed until all suffering, all ignorance, all disease and all crime shall have disappeared from society—while noxious gases, poisonous trees and minerals, beasts and birds of prey, and all other natural types of the transition period of the earth's development, will no longer exist.

Until very recently, (says the great LIEBIG,) it was supposed that the physical qualities of bodies—such as hardness, color, density, transparency, &c. depended upon the nature of the elements of which they were composed; and of course that substances of entirely differing qualities must consist of equally differing elements. It was impossible to imagine two bodies, composed of precisely the same elements and in exactly the same relative proportions, possessing physical and chemical properties totally opposite to each other.

And yet the great practical philosopher goes on to demonstrate, by experiments which any one may try for himself, that these ideas were all utterly wrong. A great many substances have been discovered among organic bodies composed of the same elements in the same relative proportion and yet exhibiting physical and chemical properties totally distinct. They are called in chemistry *isomeric*; and among them whole and extensive classes of bodies known as the volatile oils, oil of turpentine, essence of lemons, oil of balsam, of copaiba, rosemary, juniper, and many others, differing widely from each other in their odor, in their medicinal effects, in their boiling point, specific gravity, &c. are exactly identical in composition—they contain the same elements, carbon and hydrogen, in exactly the same proportions.

So, too, the crystalized part of the oil of roses—the most delicious and enchanting of perfumes, to inhale which instantly makes beautiful ideas and harmonious sounds and symmetrical shapes float through the brain—is a compound body containing exactly the same elements as the noisome gas with which we light the streets, a leaky pipe of which sickens with its intolerable odor a whole neighborhood.

The truth, then, in regard to the physical world, is that things are beautiful or ugly, delightful or disgusting, not on account of the materials of which they are composed, but in accordance with *the order in which the particles are arranged*. Otter of roses is but crystalized street gas—the white milky knobs we sometimes see on furniture, but uncrystalized glass. The preliminary condition of all things is unperfect, crude, opaque, or as the chemists say, *amorphous*. The ultimate capacity of all things is beauty, transparency, delight—in a word, *crystalization*. Now let us apply one analogy to the moral condition of society.

We look abroad upon the world and find society in utter and apparently hopeless confusion. Everywhere the immense majority of mankind are suffering horrible oppression, want, misery, degradation,—whole races being annihilated and entire kingdoms depopulated by starvation, while a few hundred thousand men waste and riot in the wealth of the world, the produce of millions of toiling hands and weary bodies. Over the greater portion of the globe the night of heathenism or Mahometanism still reigns, while the enlightened and progressive empires of Europe unite their slave-armies to crush a people struggling for the liberty of choosing their own form of government. Despotism is on the Rhine—Despotism spreads her blighting wings over Italy and Hungary, and paralyzes the arm of industry throughout fertile Asia and along the prolific shores of the Nile. The fairest and goodliest portion of this beautiful earth, which God has given to man for his heritage and dwelling place—endowing him with capacities to create, the faculties to appreciate forms of enjoyment and felicity innumerable—is inhabited but by wretches, starving slaves, to whom life is the bitterest curse and death the only blessing. In our own country things are not quite so bad, because they have not had time enough to become so—but the *tendencies* are in the same direction and if left to operate unrestrained would lead to it in the end. In the single city of New York we spend half a million per annum to support paupers and criminals: the moment it is dark the principal thoroughfares are rendered impassable to virtue and modesty by troops of bad, reckless women, driven by treachery, desertion, starvation, to loathsome lives and onward to still more loathsome deaths. In every branch of human interest—in the workshop, the counting-house, the store, the office of the professional man—Fraud and Falsehood rear their heads, twin demons of the epoch. The respectable financier will rob you of your money with worthless stock, which he himself will set about reducing to its true value the moment he has made you his dupe—the wine merchant will send you poisonous compounds, dangerous to health and life itself, in place of the generous juice of the grape

for which you have paid—the fancy dealer will wheedle your wife and daughters out of two hundred per cent. profits on his flimsy wares, and sell to the next customer, who happens to be sharp, for less than cost—the family grocer mixes his sugars, adulterates his teas and puts peanuts with his coffee—the butcher sends you the breast of lamb that died of the rot, and the milkman will label his cart “Pure Orange County Milk” and from it supply you with the disgusting, unwholesome, poisonous drainings of the distillery.

The injustices practised upon the laboring classes are still worse, and many of them heart-rending. To say nothing of the totally inadequate compensation given those patient men who perform all the hard and hurtful and revolting labor of society, and who ought therefore to be better paid than others, many of whose occupations are in themselves a pleasure—look for a moment at the condition of those twenty thousand women in our city obliged to support themselves by the labor of their fingers. We will not dwell on the barbarous outrages practised upon these helpless creatures by their mercenary and soulless employers—we will not recall the vivid pictures of their suffering (yet all too faint to truly represent the original,) with which modern literature and journalism has made the public familiar. But they are here—they go on and increase from year to year; and every season beholds, as the inevitable fruits of these crimes, hundreds of victims added to the ranks of prostitution.

Whence all these disorders, in a world so capable of supplying abundance of homestead and food to every one of its inhabitants, and peopled by creatures so exquisitely susceptible to happiness and ennobling reflections and emotions? Of how much happiness is mankind capable—and how insignificant the portion he actually enjoys? Do we not see that there is radically disorder somewhere? The elements are all here, and in their proper proportions—for God himself distributed them: but *they are not in an amorphous condition.* SOCIETY IS NOT YET CRYSTALIZED.

But it is not by an impulse from without that we must expect to see the present disorder disturbed and an opportunity given for the elements of society to arrange themselves in harmonious and crystalline forms, whose beautiful product shall be human happiness. Herein consists the difference between solid and senseless particles of mere matter, of which the chemist's crystals are formed, and that fiery, aspiring, heaven-invading essence, the human soul. Carrying within her own consciousness the sense of her own glorious destiny, it is alone from herself that the powerful impetus must come to break up the present amorphous condition of society and leave it to recombine in symmetrical and crystallic forms, according to the immutable laws of divine freedom in order and variety in unity which keep the starry universe singing upon its harmonious way. This truth is now beginning to be felt; but what is the special nature of this impulse, or whence it is to come, men as yet know nothing. They are like half-wakened men—feeling conscious that the morning is come, but not yet able to look in the proper direction for the light.

CHAPTER XI.

THE YOUNG PRIMA DONNA.—A DEBUT, AND HOW TO GET UP A FURORE.

Many weeks had elapsed from the time we last saw Celio. The new journal had been established and had made a great sensation. Everybody was delighted, excited, frightened, by its charming audacity, the freshness and vigor of its criticism upon men women and things, the boldness of its prophesies, the bitterness of its denunciations. Subscriptions, advertisements, and patronage of all kinds flowed in upon the treasury in a golden stream. Celio, whose activity and minute knowledge of details were as remarkable as his mental quickness and physical sensitiveness, had organized an excellent corps of sub-editors and reporters—patient laborers at the wheel that drives on the vast engine, but who never succeed in drawing any benefit from its mighty labors save their weekly stipend. He, himself, however, had suddenly emerged from his chrysalis state of existence and had become, to a certain extent, the master spirit of the establishment. It is true that the superior experience and inexhaustible resources of Captain Earnest were the controlling and sustaining influence of the new journal; but the Captain had found Celio at once so apt, so able and conscientious, that he gladly abandoned to him the management of affairs, while his own time was more at his command in his various other schemes—but of which Celio himself knew not nearly so much as the reader can perhaps guess.

Celio was seated at his editorial table, which was covered with letters, papers, concert tickets, disemboweled envelopes and disregarded communications, presenting a perfect chaos of wasted ink and misappropriated stationery. Here was an invitation, written in a flourishing, clerky hand, to accompany the splendid new steamer *George Washington* on a trial trip down the Bay; and beside it lay an unopened package of superior soap, with a note of compliments from the manufacturer, who requested, in a postscript, “a few lines in your widely-circulated and independent journal.” Cards to firemen’s dinners and floating balls, soirees d’artiste and trade-sales, were heaped upon each other in confusion; and a circular of three pages, giving a minute description of a patent washing-machine, stared boldly out from a heap of certificates of the infallible efficacy of sugar-coated pills. Listlessly Celio turned over these evidences of his editorial importance, until his eye fell upon a little note, directed to himself in a picturesque hand, and the seal of which was still unbroken. He hastily opened it, and having devoured its contents with his eyes, he took up his hat and left the office.

In a few minutes he was at the Astor, and hurrying up something less than a league of the interminable staircase, knocked softly at a door. It was quickly opened, and, in a joyous tone, Nina exclaimed,

"Ah Celio, how glad I am that you have come! Your friend Captain Earnest has just been here, perplexing me so with his strange talk that I scarcely know whether I am in my senses. What indeed does he mean?"

"I am sure he means your good, dear Nina, and you may be certain that his advice is always important. But what has he said? You seem startled."

"Why, he tells me that, although he is delighted with my singing, and that everybody who knows anything of music must be delighted also, yet I shall never succeed in my project unless an excitement is got up."

"He is doubtless right, Nina, for a very great majority of those from whom the money is to come know nothing at all of music, and only patronize whatever is fashionable. But what means of producing this excitement did he propose?"

"Oh, he said I must give a grand soiree to all the editors, and make acquaintance with them when they come. I must smile and say very civil things to all of them, and be very thankful for their good opinion, and suffer them to press my hand if they wish, and listen to everything they choose to say. Oh, I can never do this. I should be angry with myself if I thought for a moment that I could do it. After all, why should I? When the time comes, I go to the theatre and sing—as well as I can. If the public is pleased, why that is well; if not, how can I help it?"

"Yes, but suppose the public, instead of being there to hear you, is attending to its business and pleasure elsewhere, and never comes to hear you at all? Then what will it matter if you sing like Persiani and act like Malibran? And besides, even if you had a full house and everybody was in raptures with you, yet it would all amount to nothing unless you had made friends with the editors. The *Courrier des Salons* would announce in a pompous, dogmatical tone, that your voice was a file, your school quite passe, and your style altogether lacking in brilliance and expression. The *Morning Ponderosity* would prove to the entire satisfaction—of at least its musical critic—that there never was any singer but Signora Sugarina, and that because you were not Signora Sugarina you of course were not worth hearing. And so, notwithstanding your fancied triumph, you would discover next morning, before breakfast, that you had made a decided failure. Yes—Captain Earnest is perfectly right. You must have a soiree by all means."

"I begin to fear, caro, that I shall never get through with this. seems a terrible business to me."

Oh, that's because you are not used to it. By and by it will furnish you with something to laugh at. And, now I think of

it, we will improve a little on Captain Earnest's plan, and invite to our soiree the leaders of the various fashionable cliques, who each thinks that it constitutes the very highly-concentrated essence of good society. Leave it all to me. Go on with your practising, and give me the writing-desk. I know the names of all it is requisite to invite, and can write a neat little crowquill hand, you know, of which you need not be ashamed."

"Well, go on, then, since it must be—but let me help you. There, now you write and I will enclose and seal the precious billets and have them all ready for you to direct. When is it to be?"

"To-morrow evening, I think; the sooner the better."

While Celio and his fair protege are engaged in their pretty employment, we will take the opportunity of bringing up the incidents of our story to the present point, and explaining the new position the various characters of the drama had been made to assume.

CHAPTER XII.

AN ESCAPE AND ANOTHER PIPSONIAN INTERVIEW. THINGS ARE GETTING TERRIBLY TANGLED WILL THE AUTHOR EVER UNRAVEL THEM?

On the morning following the funeral of Mr. Carleton, at early-daylight, his widow stealthily left the house, while all its inmates were still in repose; and stepping into a cab, which had evidently been ordered beforehand to the place, drove rapidly off up Greenwich street. On awaking, Nina found a letter on her dressing-table directed to herself in the hand of Mrs. Carleton. She hastily opened it, and found that it contained another addressed to Celio. The letter to herself read as follows:

"Beloved Daughter—I desert you at the moment when you most need protection—yet this is not of my choice. I cannot tell you all the horrible events that have come upon me, but will sum them up in one word: I am a beggar—literally, wholly destitute of every means of prolonging life, save by the labor of my own hands. This is no hardship to me; and were it myself alone who felt it, I should not even suffer, much less complain. But for you, dear, noble, tender flower, so brightly opening and so greatly in need of careful nurture,—it breaks my heart to leave you thus unprovided. Where I go, and what is to be my fate, seek not to enquire—this is my solemn request and I know you will observe it. I have revolved the matter over

carefully and painfully ; and I have at last been driven from every point to the one miserable conclusion that I can be of no use to you whatever, and that I should only increase your embarrassments by attempting to remain with you. The sum enclosed is yours— you need have no delicacy in using it, for it is the precious amount your poor father bore upon his person when he was carried from the blazing building. You cannot return it if you would—for you will never see me nor hear of me more.

“ This letter reads cold and cruel—I have written it so on purpose, while my heart was overflowing with love and tenderness—because you have a bitter struggle to endure, and you will thank me in your heart, by and by, for suffering the first trial to come from the hand—not the heart—of a true friend. It is this playing with grief, this make-believe sorrow that fits the heart for enduring the real with indifference—the only enviable state. Remember, oh my daughter ! that this world has but one lesson to impart—indifference. Resistance to fate is the mere struggle of the maniac with his chains and prison-gates : indifference to suffering is the godlike armor of the philosopher. You do not understand this now, but one day you will. Meanwhile, do not love me too much nor think of me too sadly. It is not so bad, a few years of mere absence of pleasure. Meanwhile it is very possible to exist peacefully and enviably without pleasure.

“ I have enclosed a letter to our mutual friend and your noble preserver, Mr. Celio. Henceforth he takes my place in watchful care over you. Trust him, Nina—confide to him, ever and always, without hesitation and without reserve. His nature is as pure as your own, and his strong will and fiery energies give him power to battle successfully with fortune. Yes, he will prevail, and prevail for you. Beautiful Nina, blush not when I tell you your heart's secret—he loves you and is beloved. Ah, dearest, he is all worthy of you. Lean trustingly upon him—and may your destiny be as bright and glorious as it would be were I your guardian spirit, walking between you and directing your steps !—Farewell forever !

“ ADELAIDE CARLETON.”

Even while Nina, her eyes streaming in tears, was engaged in perusing this strange and yet most womanly epistle, Celio was announced ; and hastily completing her toilet, she took both letters and immediately joined him. He appeared greatly surprised at her disordered appearance ; but putting Mrs. Carleton's letter into his hand, she made a gesture that she would soon return, and hurried from the room.

It is necessary, in order to understand fully the character of this woman, that the letter to Celio should be laid before the reader.

“ My dearest friend,” it began, “ this letter has cost the severest struggle of my life—a struggle in which my pride, my love, and every most powerful element of my nature, have participated. But love

has conquered : and I have now the courage—now that is the absolutely certain that I am never to see you again in this world—to own that I love you, that I long have loved you, more than life. To no other man who ever lived could I confess this, under the dire circumstances in which I am placed : but I *know* that you will not for a moment presume upon it nor accuse me falsely. It is a strange thing for me to confess—and yet I do confess it—that I have never been able to blame myself for loving you, even while I loved my husband and would have died but to have saved him a pang. This is a terrible mystery—but I have not now the heart to solve it. Let it pass to the dark abyss of time.

“ But it is because I love you as, it seems to me, that no woman ever loved, that I tell you calmly and deliberately we are never again to meet on earth. Were it otherwise, or were that otherwise possible, this avowal had not been made. But I could not bear to die with the great secret of my life unuttered. Now that the confession is written, you cannot dream how gloriously serene and tranquil I am. Yes—for this instant I am supremely happy. My soul overleaps this life and beholds us in the spirit world. There, Celio, there we may love all who love us, and yet do wrong to none.

“ But you—you love another, even my beautiful and peerless Nina. It were impossible for you *not* to love each other. But do not do me the injustice to believe that this occasions me one pang of jealousy. No—I glory in it—it is my chief source of consolation in the dark path I am henceforth to tread alone. And especially that I am forced to forego henceforth all my sweet watchfulness over this tender flower, and to commit her entirely to your trust and keeping. Oh, Celio, strengthen your arm and nerve your heart to sustain her ! She loves you and confides in you with all her soul. Next to God she could not have chosen one so worthy. She will tell you my situation and my future prospects. I could not bring myself to speak of them in this sacred place.

“ Regard these as my dying words, dear Celio—for so they are to you ; and let them be sometimes remembered in the high and brilliant career that awaits you. Think of me never with sadness, but only with kindness and forbearance.

“ ADELAIDE.”

The perusal of this letter was calculated to create a whirlwind of emotion in the bosom of Celio ; but he stopped not now to analyze his sensations or even to permit himself to be conscious of them. The precious characters had been graven upon his heart—he could read the dear history they chronicled at another time.—At present one idea solely possessed him—to discover the retreat of the beloved fugitive and induce her to forego her rash, her impossible determination. Knowing how pure and free from entanglements of every kind was the life of this noble woman, he had no difficulty in concluding that this last sudden blow which had fallen upon her with such force

as to drive her from her home must be a pecuniary one. Although he had not had the slightest suspicion of the embarrassments under which Mr. Carleton had labored, yet since his death he had incidentally heard a rumor to the effect that he died bankrupt. This he attributed at once to idle calumny—the closing of the establishment being sufficiently accounted for by the death of its principal. Now, however, the topic recurred to him ; and he scarcely needed the explanation furnished by Mrs. Carleton's letter to Nina to lead him to a tolerably accurate conclusion. Passing from the parlor he knocked at Nina's little room, and found the poor girl sobbing dolefully. He endeavored to console her, and assured her that he would never rest until he had discovered and reunited her to her friend. While they were mingling their lamentations, and the quick mind of Celio was constructing his plan of operations for discovering Mrs. Carleton, the bell rang, and the servant came to announce that Mr. Pipson had called to see Mrs. Carleton ; and as she was not in her own room the servant had come naturally to that of the young lady.

"She is not here just now," said Nina, "but tell the gentleman that I will come down in a moment."

"Who is Mr. Pipson?" inquired Celio when the servant had retired.

"I know not—a strange, evil-looking man, who was here yesterday morning, and who I cannot help thinking has exercised some mysterious influence in driving Mrs. Carleton from her home."

"I do not know who it can be—I never heard the name before. Stay you here—I will go down to him."

Mr. Pipson appeared greatly surprised at meeting Celio, and observed, hesitatingly, as Celio bowed and seated himself by his side, "I was expecting to see Mrs. Carlton, sir—or at least the young lady, who——"

"Both ladies are engaged, sir," replied Celio, "and will not be able to do themselves the honor of seeing you this morning. But I am deputed as their friend——"

"Oh, you are the friend of both ladies, are you?" inquired Pipson, sneering insolently. "Well, I must confess that you are a very fortunate young man."

"What do you mean, sir?" asked Celio sternly, and fixing his glaring eyes full upon the other.

"Oh, nothing, nothing in this world, my dear sir," said Pipson, depreciatingly ; "I had a little affair of business to transact with Mrs. Carleton this morning, and will wait until she is disengaged."

"That would be unnecessary and inconvenient. You had better call some other time," said Celio in the haughtiest tone he could assume—it appearing to him that this was the most likely way of making Pipson disclose the object of his visit. He was not mistaken. Mr. Pipson mused a moment, and then, rising his head almost erect, he said firmly :

"I have decided."

"Upon what, sir?"

"To remain here until Mrs. Carleton can see me."

"Well, I also have decided that you shall *not* stay another moment. Go!"

"Young man, you take liberties, not only with me, a stranger who has never offended you, but with the interests of your *friend* Mrs. Carleton. How do you know that I am not also her friend?"

"Your looks, your tone of voice—every thing about you convince me that Mrs. Carleton can have no sentiment but of contempt for you. I trust, at least, so far as this to my instinctive impressions. But I tell you furthermore, that you cannot see Mrs. Carleton. She is not in the house, nor do we know what has become of her."

"What! You do not say she has fled! I don't believe it—I must see for myself."

"What are you doing? *This* is the way to the street door, Mr. Pipson."

"But I am not going to the street door—I am going to find Mrs. Carleton. My God! It cannot be that she has fled! No, no, I will not believe it."

"I think you are mad," said Celio quietly, placing himself in Pipson's way, "to suppose I will let you pass anywhere *but* through the street door, after what I have said."

"Mr. ——— what's your name, shall I tell you a bit of a secret? This house is mine, and I have a right to go through it in any direction I please."

"Insolent liar, what do you mean?"

"I mean just this—that old Carleton died owing me more than he was worth, and that I hold a mortgage on this house and every thing it contains. It is mine, sir, mine—to do with as I please. Now leave me, and leave *my* house."

"Mr. Pipson," said Celio, keeping very calm, although his nostrils dilated and his chest heaved with passion, "I believe you tell a *trociouf* alsehood—I know you are a villain. But if even what you say is true, I know enough of law to know that you have no authority for taking possession of your property in this summarily manner. If this house is really yours, the laws shall meet with no obstructions in putting you in possession of it. But beware! Do not attempt to go beyond that! And now, I beg of you, go away. It will be better for all of us, for I am *not* less than half mad already, and I will not be answerable for the consequences if you stay."

There was a dignity and earnestness in the tone and aspect of Celio that made him truly majestic besides the mercenary, grovelling, cowardly Pipson. The latter gnawed his lips with rage and mortification, but did not dare to prolong the contest. Slowly and silently he crept away; and the moment he had passed beyond the sight of the frowning Celio, he glided swiftly and noiselessly into the street.

CHAPTER XIII.

“THE” AFFAIR OF THE SEASON.—HOW MR. JENKINS ABUSED MRS. JENKINS AND THE GIRLS, AND HOW THEY ALL TOOK A BACK SEAT.

It was the night. The rehearsals were all over—the newspapers had exhausted themselves for the millionth time in heaping panegyrics upon the new prima donna, whom they, every one, had “fortunately had the pleasure of hearing in private at a soiree at one of the fashionable hotels.” Her voice, if you believed the conscientious assertions of the musical critics—and in New York every paper, daily or weekly, has a “musical critic”—her voice was like Persiani’s, Grisi’s, and Jenny Lind’s, while her expression was a compound of all three, with a dash of Alboni, a sprinkle of Viardot Garcia, and a something superior to all. The western hemisphere was to be astonished. Monsieur Moustache, the leader of the French clique, who had assisted at the debut of Mme. Mara at the Conservatoire, went about mysteriously with a very momentous look and an oracular laying of the finger beside the nose. If anybody ventured to ask him his opinion of the new prima donna, he shook his head solemnly, shrugged his shoulders intensely, and throwing up his eyes and extending his palms, exclaimed in a pitying voice:

“And you were not there! My God! how do you manage to exist!”

If it was a lady who questioned him, as it very often was, for he was a deserved favorite in that quarter, he contented himself with precisely the same course of gesticulation, and the observation:

“Oh, my dear madam, you will see, you will hear! You have a great happiness in store for yourself.”

So the excitement ran through all the different circles of French society—and they are not very clearly defined nor classified in our democratic metropolis. The native gallantry and excitability of that chivalric and enthusiastic people were aroused. It was a very long time that they had been without an excitement—ever since Cinti-Damoreau and Vieuxtemps; and the new prima donna was quite a god-send. It was true she was Italian; had she been French, there is no knowing where it would have stopped.

The English clique was cold and reserved, yet keenly on the watch. It ought to be known that all English musicians have a special mission—which is to convince the blind and stupid world that Rossini was a fool, Donizetti an ignoramus, and Bellini an ass. As to Verdi, he is little better than a cut-throat; and these pious

and conscientious gentlemen never speak of him without a grimace of contempt nor write of him without abuse. The Italian vocalists fare little better, with them, than the composers. In fact, they kindly take the trouble of convincing you, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that Italy is no country for music. It may grow very good wine; and make pretty fair imitation Welch cheeses, and get up a sausage, respectable at least in size—but as to music, they know nothing of it. In the glorious days when that great Englishman, Handl, and Dr. Arne and the other (we don't remember what other) lights of the art lived and wrote, then was the millenium of music. Everything since is mere trash and sing-song. It is a perfectly clear case that all the singing and instrumenting, in a new country like this, should be done by Englishmen. Mothers sang to their children—why should not the mother country sing and play to hers? These foreigners were interlopers, and ought to be put down.

The natives of course had no opinion of their own; but they were decidedly good-natured and strongly inclined to find a debutante—especially if she were young and pretty—everything that had been claimed for her. It is a somewhat remarkable fact that American ladies are quite as fond of pretty women as the gentlemen, and will accept almost any audacious violator of good taste and Grecian profile, as a lionne of the largest dimensions. Such a thing as jealousy of another's attractions seems never to enter their heads. The mamas and misses therefore of Above-Bleecker had made up their minds to be astonished and delighted; and nothing had been talked of or thought of for a fortnight but the debut and the new dresses and head-gear, also destined to appear for the first time on that occasion. As evening drew near the West End was in the most interesting flutter imaginable. Wreaths were tied on and tossed aside, ribbons knotted and unknotted—bows made and undone as plenty as lovers—the tiniest and plumpest of feet inserted in Nunn's most delicate white satin slippers—bracelets clasped round the whitest arms this side of the Houris—and attitudes and glances practised on the sofa, while mama and the maid stood in the back parlor to watch the effect. The Indolent Ten Thousand were for once alive. Everybody was going to the Opera. The gentlemen now began dropping in from "down town" and the counting-house; and the great and momentous question to be met and answered was, "where are our seats?" (The subscription system has since settled all that.) You could tell by the manner of the culprit as he entered the door whether he had been able to secure front seats, or had only arrived at the box office in time to get anything he could lay his hands on. Some, as they mounted the steps, with a bold and confident air, drew out the latch-key with a defiant flourish, as if it had been a sword, and flung wide open the door. They were met in the hall by the ladies, eager, loud, clamorous in demanding where were their seats.

"There, there—in front, I tell you, for four!" exclaimed the gentleman, in a triumphant tone, brandishing the certificate above

his head and skimming it in among his perfumed assailants. Others, who had been less fortunate, would stop the stage half a block from their own doors and crawl reluctantly down the basement stairs, like a pauper after cold victuals, and thence gradually work their way up to the drawing-room.

"Well, Mr. Jenkins! Fifth seat back, I suppose, as usual! Or pray, are you going to perch us, perhaps, in the second tier among the grocers' wives!"

"My dear, you see"—

"Don't my dear me! Of course I see—that you're a fool and an ungrateful man, who deserved to be left in the dirt where I found you. I never can make you feel a proper sense of our consequence, and stand up for your rights like a man. You let everybody run over you. I only wish I was a man!"

"I'm so glad you are not, my dear!"

"Well, it's lucky for you, perhaps. And there's that abominable, fat, ugly, snuffy, vulgar Mrs. Wiggins, who I don't doubt has got front seats for herself and all her red-armed, carrotty-haired daughters—Mr. Wiggins has some feelings for the helpless beings placed under his protection! And there's Angelina's new embroidered lace skirt—cost a hundred and fifty dollars at Stewart's, and everybody knows she is going to wear it—how is anybody to see it unless she gets up and stands on the seats! It is perfect throwing away of money. But it's always just so. I wish I'd staid at home!"

And Mr. Jenkins makes his escape into the basement, to dine on a cold leg of mutton, while the amiable Mrs. J. proceeds in the most scientific and well-received form to have a fit of hysterics, which is ultimately subdued by a little weak brandy and water.

But it is night. The lamps are lit and the carriages begin to turn aside from Broadway and rattle saucily up to the door. Omnibuses, too, stop at the corner, and delicately-shrouded ladies are assisted to the sidewalk by their economical cavaliers, who stuff hood and wrapping-shawls into their hats and cram overshoes into their coat-pockets, thus avoiding cab-hire as well as cloak-money. The private carriages whirl up in rapid succession, each depositing its precious burden and wheeling off to take its place in line, ready for the grand rush and scramble which was to close the evening's performance.

The lobby was filled with critics and dandies, who had taken post in the most conspicuous manner, for the purpose of examining the ladies as they came in. Nor did the fair creatures appear at all abashed at this gauntlet of glances. And in fact there was no need. They were armed cap-a-pie—at all points. The young and plump ones did not scruple to make a liberal display of their exquisite forms, to the farthest point which fashion—good, easy goddess!—permitted. While the older ones, and those decidedly passees, with a becoming horror of all such improprieties, (which were "never tolerated when they were children,") muffled their skinny necks in an infinity of a sort of semi-lucid gauze, very appropriately named

"illusion," and barricaded their too susceptible bosoms behind breastworks of cotton. Their feet and ancles, however, were still good, and betrayed not the marks of time; and it took one's breath away to see these modest dowagers, as they reached the foot of the stairs, raise their faces from behind their fans, and withdraw with a wide sweep the curtain of the spacious jupe from the exquisitely-filled satin slipper. All, young and old, carried double-barreled glasses, some still in their doeskin cases, some already drawn and ready for action—while you could distinguish the green horns in an instant, by their stopping to potter with the little boy perched on the head of the bannister post, bawling the libretto of "Lucy de Lamermore—only two shil'n!"

"Well, well, I declare now," said a pursy, vacant-looking old gentleman with his finely-fixed-up waxen daughters on his arm, ducking and bridling at every step, as if they were trying to creep still further out of their frocks, "this now is something like a house—something fit for genteel people to come to. How do you like our sofa, Mary Arabella Adeline dear?"

"Oh, pa, I think it is so nice—quite distingue, you know. I can see everybody that is worth seeing."

"Yes," broke in the youthful Sarah Amelia Anne, "and then I am so glad to think that we've got right in front of that vulgar Mrs. Doctor Blank, and her fussy little things of daughters."

"I don't see how they manage to come to the opera any how, on his income," said the good natured old gentleman. "But you musn't scandalize, girls. 'Taint perlite."

And the retired oysterman swept into the broad aisle with his aristocratic daughters, turning up their noses with the most undisguised contempt at the plebeian herd of literary men, artists, editors, and such common people, who had no sofas and were obliged to content themselves with chairs in the parquet.

"Well, by Jupiter!" said Tom Gingham, a young "gent" with the early down of a dawning moustache irradiating as with a streak of faded sunshine his auroral mouth; "if that old oyster-merchant and his frumpsey daughters don't take a state in this crowd you may kill me! But the girl, though, has an arm! Eh, Frank?"

The personage appealed to as Frank was a very tall, lathy-looking individual, dressed to death in black and white, and who stood as straight as if he had swallowed his yardstick. His eyes were half closed, and the sudden question of his companion seemed to startle him from his perpendicularity. He rescREWED his little black quizzing-glass into his right eye; and gently dusting his patent leathers with a spotless handkerchief perfumed with the genuine Jockey Club, replied solemnly,

"Y-a-a-s—that is—con-siderably! Ehem!"

The house was all light and perfume, and gentle murmur and excitement. The efforts made to arouse the attention of the fashionable world had been successful, and all who claimed to move

within the mystic circle that separated the two classes of society had striven to be present, and in their most magnificent attire. In this little focus, republicanism gleamed for an instant with all the jeweled and full-blown splendor of a genuine aristocracy. The essence of the whole race, from Plymouth Rock to the Dickens' ball, was here concentrated. And in truth so many beautiful women might seldom anywhere be seen collected together. The graceful, bird-like, exquisitely-dressed French woman, scintillating amid her circle of admirers—the cold and stately New-England beauty, with her dazzling complexion and glorious form, maddening in its implacable repose—the voluptuous Italian, undulating like waves in the bay of Venice—the cherry-cheeked descendant of the Knickerbockers, placid, cool and joyous—were mingled in a way that filled the eye and brain with a reeling sense of intoxication. The whole theatre looked like a gigantic vase, overcrowded with flowers, which had become suddenly endowed with life—and one feared, as they fluttered and sparkled beneath the golden-beamed chandelier, that they were about to take wing and fly away.

At length, half an hour after the time—for people who generally are very much hurried with their affairs, think it ill-breeding to be punctual away from the counting-house—the overture commenced, and the pretty murmur of the house gradually subsided beneath the measured undulations that poured out beneath the waving strokes of the Moses in a white cravat and jeweled wand, who patiently smote a green tin candle-shade for a rock, until the whole house was filled with a sea of melody.

Nina was alone in the little dressing-room adjoining the stage, and whence she was in a moment to issue into the full blaze of the brilliant theatre. Her heart beat violently, and the unusual tightness with which her corset was laced, (as is the custom with singers, who erroneously imagine it gives them greater powers of enduring the terrible strain of a night's performance upon the chest and lungs), had driven somewhat too much blood into her face, and rendered artificial color unnecessary. She had judiciously chosen a part which required but the simplest costume and action at the commencement—trusting to the power of sympathetic identification with the character for strength to go through with the heavier and more difficult scenes at the close. She was not afraid—for the consciousness of genius, and that glow of inspiration that tinges the Italian more or less brightly in all situations and places, imparted a confidence for which she herself could scarcely account. She felt impatient for the preliminary scene to be over, and an eagerness to enter upon that brilliant but dangerous career, up whose shining pathway gleamed the temple of immortality. For the first time in her life her spiritual being was fully roused within her, and she was in full possession of herself. She seemed not to be going to a trial but a triumph. And as at last the scene changed, and the first note of her entering music fell upon her ear, she started to her feet, and waving her

hand majestically, as if to bid all mean and common aspirations adieu, she ran from her room and plunged into the light that lay in blinding sheets upon the stage. For a moment, like a swimmer suddenly entering the water, she reeled and caught her breath, stretching out her arms as if seeking for support. But the gesture had revealed to the breathless and expectant audience the exquisite grace of her form, while her wondrous beauty beamed into every heart like a new-risen star—and a storm of spontaneous applause rose from the house. The prompter beneath his tin umbrella gave her the signal to go on—the conductor, with his ruby-tipped baton suspended high in air, waited the first tone of her recitative; and, rallying her fading energies, she speaking sang!

At first her voice was low and silvery, gliding from note to note of the recitative, brokenly and doubtfully, as a little rivulet reaches murmuring from stone to stone. But gradually the brook became a river, deepening and widening as it went, until, suspended in a long and liquid cadenza, it burst forth into the full and perfect tide of song. The novice was a novice no more. Her bosom already swelled with the consciousness of triumph. Her voice, sent forth over that mute and rapt audience, returned to her like the voice of her destiny, laden with glorious messages of greatness yet to come. In an instant the immortal winged creature, glorying in all the hues of the departed sunbeam, had burst her chrysalis and floated away toward heaven.

She paused—and for a moment the audience suffered themselves still to lie in the trance into which they had been plunged. All hearts felt alike its magic influence. The cold and age-hardened thrilled again as beneath the fire of youthful love—the young wept with excess of sympathy. It was one of those rare moments when a spark of the true electricity that will one day fire all hearts, flashes across the dull and gloomy horizon of life, prophesying of the beatitudes of the future, when man and his beautiful world shall have been reduced to harmony and order. There arose, as by one magnetic impulse, such a tumult of applauses as shook the very dust from the astonished folds of the proscenium curtain. Men and women united heartily in this irrepressible tribute to beauty and genius; and even the retired oyster-merchant deigned to smile and gently wave his hand, as if beckoning to the book-keeper at the establishment down town to charge three dozen to the gentleman with the red cravat—while his daughters, by a convulsive effort, actually succeeded in getting further out of their frocks, and cried “brayvo,” in utter defiance of the gender of Italian adjectives, and with the purest Manhattanese accent. Everybody was enchanted—only in one corner of the parquet, quite down by the orchestra and half hidden by the entrance to the music-room, stood a spare, melancholy, seedy-looking individual, with an immense opera-glass, and a white streak perceptible about the elbow of his coat—who, turn-

ing to another gentleman of an aspen-colored countenance and a large club under his arm, said,

"Well, for my part, I don't know what they are all making such a noise about. I haven't heard any thing yet. Have you, Jo?"

"Why yes—I've heard a develish quantity of applause for nothing. But what can you expect from a parcel of codfish aristocracy? Do you know that this Signorina Screamiani never invited me to her *soiree* at the Astor?"

"Nor me."

"Well—she'll find out, perhaps, who are the real friends of art in New York. The *Saturday Smasher*, shall at least do her justice."

"And so shall the *Weekly Gallinipper*—let's go and imbibe."

But notwithstanding the hostile sentiments of the *Saturday Smasher* and the *Weekly Gallinipper*, the success of the new prima donna was unequivocal. All the leading papers vied with each other in their laudatory notices, and poured out column upon column of adulation. And by Wednesday of next week, (then the weekly papers dated on Saturday all went to press on that day,) even the *Gallinipper* and *Smasher* had become mollified—or thought it good policy to appear so—and joined loudly in the general pulse.

CHAPTER XIV.

A HINT FOR OLD HAYS—HOW TO TRACK A FUGITIVE—WITH SOME VERY WHOLESOME REFLECTIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF VENTILATION. THE STARCH A LITTLE TAKEN OUT OF MR. PIPSON.

As soon as Celio had got rid of the pertinacious Mr. Pipson he bade Nina good-bye; and promising to return in a few hours, sallied out in search of Mrs. Carleton. He knew that Pipson could not disturb the premises, at least for that day; and entertained the most intense anxiety to trace the flight of Mrs. Carleton—not doubting, for a moment, that he should be able to persuade her to recede from her resolution. The confession of love which her letter contained thrilled him with a nameless and indescribable joy, bathing the whole world in an atmosphere of rosy light. As we have said, he did not yet permit himself to analyze his feelings—but he knew he was sublimely happy.

Another source of intense pleasure was his now altered position; for since the establishment of the new journal, and his more intimate

connexion with Captain Earnest, every thing had prospered with him, and he began to find friends, credit and influence accumulating upon him in every direction. He was no longer the poor friendless dependant and slave-martyr of his daily and nightly toil. It is true he worked hard enough, and early and late. But he was never outworn with his labor,—because his heart was in it. His whole being, ambitious, restless, eager and aspiring, found full scope for the play of all its faculties; and the mere casual weariness of the frame, which a few hours would restore, was not even worth a thought. Now, that the woman whom he adored next to heaven—the eidolon of his yearning heart, the beau ideal formed by his exquisite spirit as its own counterpart and fulfilment, was free and loved him; and now that she was in exile from her home, perhaps at that moment the slave of voluntary toil and want—how swelled his heart with hope and trust and gratitude, that he had it in his power to soothe her sorrows and protect her precious life from every harm! She to whose starlike influences over him he owed every thing he was—even himself—was now in affliction, and *he* could chase the cloud away! Glorious, triumphant thought! And in that moment of swelling exultation poor little Nina was forgotten, or only remembered dimly as a pleasant dream, that could be recalled at will. And yet Celio loved Nina, I firmly believe, more deeply, at that very moment, than he did the absent Adelaide. But a strong man's soul, like the larger and more perfect planets, desires a new bride-moon at every phase of its heaven-sweeping revolution—yet it is ever true and constant, to all, each in her appointed course and time—beaming and shining and lighting up the world of space.

Celio was persuaded that Mrs. Carleton had not sought an asylum with any friend in her own rank---he well knew that her pride and sensitiveness would not have brooked that worst of humiliations, the protection of our equals. He questioned the porter and the servants—no one had seen or knew anything of their mistress, and did not even know that she was gone. His next resort was the cabs; and here he was more successful. He soon found that a cab had been driven away from Mr. Carleton's early in the morning, and had been absent but a short time. The driver was not now on the stand, but his comrades expected him momentarily. Celio reflected that at that hour neither boat nor railroad departed; and he felt an inexpressible relief at discovering, as he imagined, that the object of his search had not left the city. The driver he was in search of soon came back, but seemed very shy and sullen. Celio, however, was not a novice; and putting a half eagle into the fellow's hand, with a promise of as much more if he would drive to the place where he had conveyed a lady at daylight from Mr. Carleton's, he was soon rattling at a furiously-slow rate (a speed peculiar to cabman,) over the rolling pavement of Greenwich street.

Suffice it that he found her, in the home of her laundress,—a low, stifling hut, erected by the griping landlord of the premises in the

rear of the main building, that he might increase his rent from the lot, while rendering both front and rear tenements unfit for habitation, by reason of the want of space and ventilation. They make it felony to sell unwholesome meats; but I have never heard of any law against the unwholesome, deadly dwellings into which land-owners and house-builders cram the poor.

But Celio paused not now to notice what at another time would have possessed for him the deepest interest. Stumbling up the narrow and tottering stairway, he threw open the little door of the room where sat, busily sewing and her gloriously head drooping wearily over her work, the brave Adelaide Carleton. Not a shadow of discontent lay on that alabaster brow—not a trace of repining at her lot obscured the majestic beauty of her face. She had decided upon her course with all the calmness and firmness of her nature, and it was impossible for her to quail or shrink in its fulfillment. With truly noble hearts the struggle is *before* succumbing to the inevitable---afterward nothing ruffles more the immortal tranquility of the subdued sea.

Adelaide thought she had taken such precaution that there was no possibility of her being discovered. She did not shrink from further intercourse with her friends from any abstract feeling of misanthrope nor any fear that her poverty would estrange those she loved. But she felt that a great and irrevocable change had taken place in her position and destiny—and above all things she could not bear the miserable egotism of embarrassing by her presence those whom she could no longer assist. And then she loved Celio, with a high, pure and holy love, as chaste as the moon and fervent as the star that ever burns and worships at her side. She had satisfied herself that Celio loved Nina; and, seeing that they were in every way worthy of each other, had long ago schooled her heart to regard them as one. The temptation of giving expression to her love, in her farewell to Celio, was too strong for human nature to resist. Annihilation is not so dreadful a fate as to contemplate the possibility of dying without uttering the love that embalms the heart in its pure flame. The soul of the lover shudders lest, with the sweet clue all unuttered on earth, she should lose forever her sister soul in the spirit-world.

So secure was Mrs. Carleton in the secrecy she had observed in leaving her home, that she did not even look up from her work, when Celio first entered the little room. But the magnetism of his presence sought its way electrically to her heart; and, forgetful of every thing in that wild thrill of delirious rapture, she uttered a cry of joy, and rushing into his arms, hid her eyes in his bosom. In that moment they understood each other.

But she almost instantly recovered herself; and withdrawing herself hastily, she said, almost reproachfully,

"Oh, Celio, how could you do this? How, after I had laid my weak women's heart bare before you, how could you hunt me out and thus bring me face to face with my humiliation?"

"Talk not of humiliation! Mrs. Carleton—Adelaide—my soul's

bright and peerless sister ! I love you with all the intensity of my nature. Do not upbraid me but destiny—for she it is who, weary at length of severing souls that exist but in each other, wills that we be united forever. I will not let you go—never, never, never !”

Adelaide was frightened. She felt all the glory of these sweet confessions, pervading her every fibre and transfiguring her into a goddess—but she felt, too, that the rapture was but the evanescent bliss of a dream. She was fully persuaded that Celio loved the gentle Nina, and that it was her solemn duty to recall him to himself. She therefore looked at him a moment in a way that instantly calmed his transports ; and laying her hand gravely on his arm, said to him,

“ Celio, you do not know your own heart so well as I. But listen, further ? How you have so soon discovered me baffles my conjecture—I thought I had made every thing secure ; and in this humble asylum I meant to have lived, peaceful and happy, in thinking of you and my beloved Nina, and praying for your happiness. But had I believed for an instant that I was not bidding you farewell forever, think you, with the chimes of my husband’s funeral knell still ringing in my ears, I would have spoken to you of love ? Do not Celio, do not dare to deem me so light and base. We are not for each other here on earth—hereafter—— !”

Celio was quelled. He reflected for a moment ; and then looking up cheerfully and with his old bright and happy smile, he said,

“ I have been wrong. I ought to have respected your injunction and not intruded upon you. But I was for once overmastered and borne beyond myself by an intense affliction at your loss. Forgive me, and make me but this one promise—that you will remain here until you hear from me again. I strongly suspect that you have been wronged out of what is justly your own, and I claim the right of sifting the affair of Pipson to the bottom. This at least is reasonable, and you cannot refuse me.”

“ I promise.”

“ Farewell !” was then uttered simultaneously by each, and they stood for one dangerous moment looking into one another’s eyes. But the strong, immutable nobility of their natures triumphed over the returning weakness of their love. Their hands met for an instant, and Adelaide was alone.

Celio hastened instantly to his friend Earnest, to whom he told all the circumstances of Mrs. Carleton being driven from her home, and having taken refuge with her laundress—asking his advice and assistance.

“ Certainly, my good Celio—such cases come precisely within my special jurisdiction. I am, you must know, a sort of utilitarian Don Quixotte, always ready and eager to do a real good, but expending no time nor strength in battling windmills. Carleton, did you say ? What, that magnificent creature Adelaide Carleton turned seamstress and living in a back garret ? I warrant me she never flinched from the change, or I have miscalculated her grossly. What’s the name of the rascally fellow who has cheated her ?”

"Pipson."

"Pipson! You mean to say that Job Pipson—— What kind of a looking man is he?—Slim, sneaken, false-toothed, knavish? Hang the fellow, it *must* be he. Here, give me pen and ink---I'll settle *his* business."

Earnest wrote a few lines, and folding the note, directed it to "Job Pipson, Esq., No.—Wall street." He handed it to Celio and said,

"Take that letter of introduction—you'll find Mr. Pipson pliable enough, I think."

"But, Captain Earnest, neither Mrs. Carleton nor myself can permit you to assume any responsibility in this matter. In that respect I am only too much your debtor. I only asked your advice."

"Read the note, Celio—read it."

Celio opened the note to Mr. Pipson and read:

"Mr. Job Pipson will instantly refrain from all proceedings on the mortgage he holds upon the residence of the late Mr. Carleton, and deliver the mortgage to my friend Celio—at the particular desire of
EARNEST."

"What does this mean?"

"It means that Mr. Pipson knows me to be aware of the fraudulent practices by which he ruined Mr. Carleton, and dare not refuse this slight retribution. There, that is all—go along now, and get your dear friends out of the difficulty."

It is not necessary for the reader, who is as well acquainted with Mr. Job Pipson as we are, to follow this operation further. He already knows that it was perfectly successful. Mr. Pipson raved and stormed and grinned horribly, but at last yielded with a very bad grace, telling Celio that he would be sweetly revenged on him some day. Celio laughed, and hastened to Nina, whom he rapidly made acquainted with what had taken place, requesting that she should accompany him to Mrs. Carleton, and aid him in persuading her to return, and once more make their home endurable.

The result of this mission of love was scarcely doubtful. Although Mrs. Carleton resisted long and steadily, yet the solemn assurance of Celio that the restoration of her home was in no way a gift, but simply her right—and when she saw, with that clear penetration for which her mind was distinguished, how much real happiness she might confer on the two beings whom she loved best—she yielded. And ere the sun went down, the three friends were united in that house which so recently had been the house of mourning, and which still contained so many melancholy associations.

CHAPTER XV.

A CALL UPON SOME OLD FRIENDS. NEW PROJECTS ON FOOT. SOMETHING WORTH THE ATTENTION OF MR. GREELEY. THE REASON WHY PADDY RAINBOW DECLINED TAKING HIS WIFE WITH HIM.

OUR story leads us once more to the quiet old house near the Tombs, where we met the thieves in the early part of our acquaintance, and where Earnest and Mr. Bunch had their sharp and dangerous conflict. Now also it was night, and the same large room occupied on that occasion was filled with nearly the same company as then. Captain Earnest, however, was not there; and the others, instead of being seated in order about the table, were collected in little groups in different parts of the room, talking low and earnestly. In one of the largest of these groups the tall form and peculiar harsh voice of him who bore the cognomen of the Screech-Owl were very conspicuous; and by his side, and evidently on the best terms with him, was seated Dandy Jake—taking little part himself in the conversation, except now and then to confirm with an oath something said by the Screech-Owl. To one at all accustomed to study tones and manners, it was clear enough that these two men had a secret understanding with each other.

"Well," said the Screech-Owl, as if continuing and reiterating a point that had been disputed, "you may say what you like. I say that this Captain Earnest is a suspicious character and I don't know what to make of him. I don't deny that he always has made fair distributions and has always been ready to get any of us out of scrapes. But that ain't the point. What I want to know is this—have any of you ever known him to be really engaged in an operation?"

"I hain't, and I've been among you from the first," said Dandy Jake.

"Has anybody?" repeated the Screech-Owl.

Nobody answered.

"Then I take it that's proof positive of what I say,"—he continued, triumphantly—"he ain't one of us, that's the way to tell it, and I've no notion of remaining in his power any longer."

"Nor I," chimed in Dandy Jake. "Who knows but what he is only a stool-pigeon, after all?"

"Oh no, not so bad," said a fellow who had not before spoken, and whose name (at least professionally) was Tom Flanders. "Remember when you was nabbed about the Washington Place little affair. There wouldn't have been no sort of a chance for you if somebody hadn't mollified Justice Dinkum and sent you straw bail in the very nick of time."

"Yes," replied the Screech-Owl, apparently somewhat abashed at this, "I don't deny the Captain's smartness nor his good faith,

so far. All I say is, that he ain't *one of us*, and has never dirtied his fingers with any real work. You'll see that what I say is true before long—mind I tell you !”

“I wonder what's going on to-night,” said Dandy Jake, “that he's called us all together so on a sudden.”

“Well,” said the pertinacious Screech-Owl, “you may all do as you —— please ; but for my own part I'll have an explanation of all mysteries before this night is over, or there'll be the devil to pay and no pitch hot, in somebody's camp.” And elevating his tall and raw-boned form upon its pedestals, he stalked slowly across the room and mingled with another group of the robbers, to endeavor to find a better reception for his hints again Captain Earnest. But the Captain's superiority in every way over these men had been so continually yet unostentatiously manifested, and so often asserted and maintained when brought in question in the earlier part of their intercourse, that the idea of any thing like a general conspiracy against his rule was entirely out of the question. Besides, it was well known that the Screech-Owl, as desperate and daring a thief as ever robbed, had aimed at the leadership of the band, after the former leader was nabbed, and that he had entertained a jealousy of Earnest, ever since he was elected.

Earnest had made his appearance in the band only a few years before, nobody could scarce tell how. But his keen judgment and shrewd way of making every body think that whatever he said must be right, soon won his way to the leadership. Yet—as the Screech-Owl had said—it was certainly strange that the Captain had never been known actively to participate in any of the numerous and daring enterprises of the band—and had always made himself more conspicuous in directing them how to avoid or get out of difficulties, than by any direct and active participation in the regular labors of his hazardous profession. But he was in all things a man of such cool and indomitable firmness, and had shown himself master of such incredible sources of aid in time of danger to his troop, that no one thought of questioning him, much less daring to disobey his commands. The influence he at once acquired and continued permanently to exert over these wild and lawless men was a mystery not to be accounted for on any orthodox principles of metaphysics. Though they boasted—and otherwise truly, too—that they feared nobody, yet they feared Earnest ; and though the buffets of the world and the hardening influence of their profession had rendered them impervious to the softer emotions, yet they loved him, and felt even a portion of dignity and self-respect while they were in the presence. This it was, perhaps, that gave him his marvelous influence over them. He was a link that still united hem with humanity ; and in aggrandizing his virtues to themselves they felt that they were not entirely unworthy to be called men, because he still neither deserted nor denounced them. If the inmost heart of every one of these men could have been examined it would have been found to contain an ineradicable sentiment of gratitude to

this man Earnest for having saved them from utter self-contempt. There are many men who lack conscientiousness to be virtuous under strong temptation to sin—many whose tastes and appetites, quite disproportioned to their means, are thus induced to sin in order to gratify them—many others who, with intelligence enough to see the horrible injustices and oppressions of society, have not faith and purity enough to save them from basely and meanly taking revenge in their own person—while hundreds are made criminal through the influence of education and early association—but not one of all these various classes of criminals have we ever met who would not have given half his years for the power to reacquire the respect of himself and of the world. But the argument and the excuse of these men is ever one and the same, and ever irresistible: “I have no character—nobody would give me work or place confidence in me, if I were to return to the world. I have only to choose between begging, starving and stealing.”

But I am not going to repeat all the admirable doctrines on the subject of the treatment and reform of criminals which have begun to take hold upon the hearts of the Christian world—with whom all true reforms ought to begin and by whom they must be taken up before they are made practical. What we are about to sketch is merely a scene from real life—not strictly accurate in all its details, for true Christian chivalry has not yet become embodied in individuals. But the sentiments and actions attributed to my characters in this chapter have been really expressed and performed; nor is there any reason to doubt that the actual motives of the actors were such as correspond with the occasion and the circumstances.

The Screech-Owl, perceiving at length that his efforts to create a general feeling against Captain Earnest were quite futile, gnawed his fingers in silence, meditating on some vague ideas of individual aggrandizement which ever fill the brain of the ambitious, but which, except when here and there accompanied by great mental power, or positive genius, lead to nothing. It was by no means certain that the conspirator himself would have dared the bold step of heading a rebellion against Earnest, even had he found it practicable. The allusion of Tom Flanders to the service which Earnest had performed for the Screech-Owl on a certain occasion of great stress and delicacy, had not been without its effect in tempering the hostility of the latter; and when the Captain at length entered the room, his whilom enemy was well-nigh become self-pacified and reconciled to things as they were.

Much to the surprise of every one, Captain Earnest was not alone. A handsome, frank-looking young man attended him, and as they entered met without flinching the threatening and frowning looks thrown upon him from every side. There was nothing defiant in his air or face—but there was plainly apparent an indomitable and habitual courage, which seemed careless or ignorant of danger, and could not stoop to the egotism of being concerned about himself.

Earnest appeared to feel that some explanation was due—or was at least politic—and moving to his accustomed seat at the head of the long table running through the center of the room, he said,

“Come friends, let us to business, if you please. I owe you an apology for being so late, and also for the liberty of introducing a stranger to our assembly. But my friend Mr. Merivale, here, is a gentleman worthy of your untimed confidence, and I pledge my own life for his good faith. Pray treat him as you would a sworn brother. Screech-Owl, my boy, come here and let me confide to you the task of making my friend at home. Mr. Merivale, Mr. David Barringer, my best friend—Mr. Barringer, Mr. Merivale.”

This ceremonious and deferential speech set everything all right in a moment; and the politic appeal to the vanity of the Screech-Owl—which appeared really almost the result of divination on the part of Earnest—restored the conspirator to the warmest and most unquestioning allegiance. The little bustle occasioned by the entrance of Earnest and Merivale and the coming to places of the company gradually subsided until all was profoundly silent. Then Captain Earnest rose, very deliberately, and with an air as if he felt himself about taking some step of great consequence, whose results were by no means certain, but could never be recalled. There was something extremely dignified, patriarchal, even tender, in his manner; and his voice, when he at length spoke, was infirm and broken.

“My friends,” he said, “I have called you together this evening to make to you a communication that will be very unexpected, and to submit a very strange proposition. This proposition involves a total change in your habits of life, occupations and principles; and lest you should accuse me of preaching, I will explain myself as briefly as I can. At present, driven by the shameless oppression and injustice which pervade society in all its walks, we occupy a position of hostility to the world. It has deprived us of the means and the opportunities of being honest and acquiring a livelihood without degradation. It was a choice simply between war and the infamy of beggary. If society did not fear us it would condemn and loathe us, let us starve and die in the gutter. It was not doubtful what part we should choose in this dilemma. I will not relate the history in detail of every man here—but I know it, to the last syllable, and I think I also know the secret emotions and sentiments of every heart—therefore I have become satisfied that there is none who would not willingly, gladly, lay down his arms against society, if he could be secured from the evils and sufferings which first induced him to take them up. You, David Barringer, I know well, were robbed of your just patrimony by the connivance of a lawyer with the public administrator of your father’s estate, and sent adrift without a penny and with a blackened reputation—some tools of the robbers having made you intoxicated and got you conveyed to the Police Office as a vagrant. You had just come ashore from a runaway apprenticeship at sea, where you were beaten twice a week and starved on rancid junk and measly

biscuit. Between the tyranny of the sea and the injustice ashore, you were forced to despair. In the Tombs you came in contact with some veterans in the war, who found you apt and willing to enlist. Who can blame you? Not I.

"And you, Tom Flanders, I can tell your story in quite as few words. Your wife got sick, and in recovering, fell in love with her doctor, and stealing all the cash and converting all your fine furniture into money, while you were absent, the pair ran away and left you to return to a cold hearthstone and a dishonored bed. You bore up stoutly awhile for the sake of your little girl, but she soon withered and pined into her grave for lack of a mother's nursing care, and then you took to the coffee-house. Of course your business and money were soon gone, and you sunk from the gilded splendor of Florence's to the weather-beaten squalor of Pete Williams'. Fortunately you here fell in with a shrewd and experienced old Krackman, who saw what was in you—taught the necessity of temperance if you would rise in the world, and showed you the way to avenge yourself on society at large for your fearful wrongs.

"But I need not go on. I have said that I know the history of you all; and I now declare that a company of nobler or truer hearts than yours cannot be found on the globe. I have been with you and watched you well, and never have I seen you swerve one hair's breadth from the strict and honorable discharge of the obligations you have imposed upon yourselves—obligations in comparison with which those of society are of less than a feather's weight. And now, listen to me well.

"I entered this honorable community not from necessity nor to gratify any especial revenge against society. It is true I have been wronged, deeply and irreparably, but not in a way that could make me turn against the world at large. But I entered into this life solely for the purpose of testing and carrying out my theory of the nature of man and the false organization of society. I have never failed to receive my fair proportion of the fruits of our depredations—but every dollar of it has been scrupulously appropriated to an object concerning the general good. That object is at length accomplished—at least so far as I am concerned—and I have now only to make you acquainted with it and see if you approve. If so, our intercourse continues unbroken. If not, this night I meet you for the last time.

"In a lovely and fruitful valley, lying along the bank of a romantic stream, I have built a spacious edifice, with ample accommodations for every member of the band, and his wife and children, if he has them or should hereafter. This dwelling is surrounded by workshops of nearly every description and furnished with an abundance of tools and materials. Ample arrangements for schooling and education, physical as well as mental, are provided. A physician of great skill and experience is ready to attend the sick at all times without fee, and there is a public hall, provided with every thing suitable for read-

ing and amusement. Surrounding these buildings lies a large and excellent farm, containing a great variety of soil, and provided with an experienced agriculturist and with every appliance for carrying on farming upon a grand scale.

"This establishment is yours. It is my free gift to my faithful and trusty companions of many years. You are at liberty to do with it as you will—only not to part with it. My desire and hope is that you will remove there at once and take possession of its handsome and comfortable apartments, apportioning them by lot. Let me recommend, however, that in this as in all the other distributions necessary, each one should endeavor to gratify his neighbor rather than himself. It is incredible how happy this noble emulation will make every one privileged to indulge in it. In the world every one is for himself and against every one else—obliged to labor incessantly at the same dull employment till it becomes irksome and disgusting—and continually in fear lest a lack of work, or the invention of some new machine, or a few days of sickness, will deprive him of bread and a roof to shelter him. Let our new community be the reverse to all this. Instead of selfishness let us take brotherhood for our ruling principle—let us distribute ourselves according to our capacities and inclinations, in the workshop, in the school-room or the field—changing from one to the other, whenever the inclination possesses us. In every department of labor a strict account will be kept by the leader elected by all engaged in that department, of the labor performed by each. An account of articles consumed by every individual will also be kept, charged at exactly the cost of production or purchase—and at the end of the year every man's account shall be squared and the balance paid over or passed to his credit. Should any be sick or indolent, or from any other cause neglect to work, let a sufficient provision for his support be made from the general stock—you will find that it will be ample.

"Do you accept?"

Oh, if the faces of those hardy men could have been daguerretyped then, as they were upturned in the light toward Earnest, we would have a new idea of the power of expression in the human countenance—an inexhaustible study for painters, sculptors and actors, in all time—models before which the antiques would appear but hard and cold. At first they appeared quite amazed and bewildered—but as they began to gather the meaning of what Earnest was saying, their countenances underwent a kind of change, as if a dead odious mask were to become by degrees a living, placid, agreeable and loving face. When he had finished, they crowded round him, some in tears, and hugged him and kissed his hands, and lavished the tenderest epithets upon him. They were no longer men—they were little children, full of love and hope and faith and gratitude, ready to commence life anew.

At length, after the excitement had a little subsided, Barringer, who always occupied a sort of position as spokesman among his fellows, said.

"But Captain, I have a few words to say, before I can accept my share of the certain happiness you offer us. It is a confession I have to make. No longer ago than this very evening I have been slandering you in the foulest way, and trying to get up a party in the band against you. I will own everything. I was mostly led on to this by my ambition, hoping one day to be captain in your stead—but I partly did suspect you of not being one of us, and of playing some big game. If I had known what kind of a game it was you were playing, I wouldn't have had this confession to make—that's all."

"My dear Barringer," said Earnest, with a cordial smile and extending his hand to the other; "don't say a word more about it. That was all natural enough; and in fact I have been apparently so neglectful of late that I wonder you haven't ousted me and spotted me long ago. However, I have never forgotten you. Is there any one to object to the plan I propose?"

"Not one—not one."

"Very good—then we will commence our preparations to-morrow. The season is already getting late—but we shall find the crops and every thing properly attended to when we arrive. We will be very quiet about it, and move off one or two at a time. I have here a little note of directions for each one, which will give you all necessary information. Does any body want money to get ready with? Mind, no more black mail!"

"Yer honor," said a small bandy-legged Irishman, who was known in the company, (probably on account of the semicircular arrangement of his pins), as Paddy Rainbow—"will I be oblegated to take Molly with me till paradise?"

"Why, Pat, what's the matter? You haven't fallen out with your wife so soon, I hope?"

"No, faith, yer honor, devil a bit of it—she kicked me out. Oh but she's one of 'em!"

"Well, in that case I should advise you to let her remain. Turn her over to me, I'll take care of her."

"Whoop! Tar and taties, but that's a good one! May the Lord presarve ye from it!"

"Why, Pat—you don't think I'd harm her, do you?"

"Is it harm her, yer honor? Divil a harm would ye do to a *flay*, and that I know well enough. Be she'd harm *you*, to the killing of ye—nothing surer."

"Well as you please. Take her or leave her; but I give you fair notice that if you don't take her I will. So don't be jealous, Pat!"

"Never fear me, your honor's worship—I'm not given to that same small potaty vice of jealousy. But if ye pacify Moll, ye'll be the Ould Gentleman himself, and nothing shorter."

Earnest smiled again—and Merivale, who had been watching the proceedings in profound but attentive silence during the evening, laughed aloud, and in so joyous and hearty a tone as immediately won the confidence of all.

"Ye are a foolosopher, belike, sir?" inquired Paddy Rainbow, in a tone half timid and half quizzical, that species of humorous half-and-half which nobody but an Irishman can successfully compound. "But whatever ye are, it's enough that ye are wid *him* to tell us ye'r a good one any how. God bless yer honor!"

"Thank you, my good fellow, a thousand times. Though I am an entire stranger here, I want to ask a question or two of this honorable company, that has something to do with the matter in hand. You must know," he continued, with a peculiar little grimace, "that I am a great temperance man, although not exactly a Father Matthew; and I take the liberty of inquiring whether any body here is in the habit of taking too much drink. Because one such man would endanger the entire success of the experiment you are about to commence. If there's one such man in this company I pledge myself to take charge of him, feed him and clothe him and have him provided with every attendance, so that he may gradually quit drink and restore his system to its natural condition, after which he shall be at liberty to take his place in the Home."

"Why, yer honor," replied Paddy, still constituting himself spokesman, "a many of us used to do that thing before we entered here. But in our profession much drink don't do, you understand. All the incurables have been sent away long ago. There isn't a man in the band, now, that takes too much of the crater—except it be my Moll."

This genuine Irish bull was received with a hearty laugh all round, and Merivale and his friend, after appointing to meet them at their new home in a fortnight, bid the company good night, and departed homeward.

"Are you tired enough for to-night?" inquired Earnest, "or would you see more?"

"Such scenes do not weary," replied Merivale—"they only supply the soul with needed hope and strength. But what other wonders have you in store for me?"

"Oh, a great variety—'for particulars see small bills,' as the showmen say. But suppose we call on my friend and protege, Celio, at the newspaper office? I wish you to know him well and help me to study him. He has some weaknesses and vanities, not yet turned exactly in the right direction; but if I am not mistaken, he is one of the choicest spirits of earth. He is just now much perplexed between a couple of beautiful women, both of whom love him to distraction. He is in a great doubt which of them he himself loves best—and that is the best evidence in the world that he loves neither. But he's a glorious fellow."

"Where did you encounter him?"

"Oh at a *soiree* of the blue-stockings in Indigo Place, where I sometimes go to amuse myself and study human nature. By the way, this is the very night—although I don't know but it may be too early in the season. Suppose we go?"

"What, in boots and bernous?"

"Oh yes—so much the better. They don't mind any thing a little eccentric—indeed, it is rather a recommendation."

"Well, agreed. Nothing could be more charming than to meet all the great men and women of the metropolis, as it were, in dishabille."

"Don't imagine too much," said Earnest, laughing.

"Never fear, it would be a pity if I could not recognize the Nine Muses and a respectable list of deities in a company of the literary lions and lionesses of New York. *Allons !*"

"Come, then—and it is very possible that we shall meet Celio there too. He has nothing to keep him at the office to-night."

CHAPTER XVI.

A PEEP BEHIND THE SCENES, AND AN INTRODUCTION TO ONE OF THE YOUNG SPROUTS OF NEW YORK ARISTOCRACY.

Celio lived in a world of dreams, through whose vague horizon floated two twin stars of lustrous beauty, gazing upon which his soul grew intoxicated with love. But he loved not *them*—their presence had wakened to life the Spirit of Love that slumbered in his soul. Once aroused, the restless and impatient motions of this spirit filled the air with a rosy flame, through which all objects were reflected in false and high-colored lights. This Celio knew not, and thought he loved both Adelaide and Nina—yet much wondered at the equality and divisibility of his emotions, and their utter lack of intensity. Mrs. Carleton, whose soul was as capacious and lofty as his own, knew and felt all this, in respect to herself. She was conscious that Celio loved not her; the struggle had already passed in her bosom and she was no more but the tender, careful, watchful, self-sacrificing friend. But she was herself deceived as to Celio's feelings towards Nina. This beautiful Italian was such a joyous and fascinating creature—so childlike in her playful and exuberant innocence—and her relations to Celio were of such a tender nature, that Mrs. Carleton took it for granted that they must love each other. But it was certain that Celio's inmost heart had not yet been touched. It is true that both Adelaide and Nina powerfully excited his love for woman—because woman is the embodiment of the Beautiful, whence natures like his ever seek to draw their sustenance. But it was also true—and this precious secret was as yet unknown even to himself—

that there was in the depths of his soul a still more secret and exquisite passion—the love of one woman forever to be conjoined to his spiritual life—which still slumbered undisturbed. Oh, the imperious, insatiate heart of man! Exacting the love and worship of woman as its common element, yet hesitating, reluctant to yield itself in return—and perhaps never yielding itself fully until the sweet magnetic sympathies of the gentle and beautiful other half of itself have by long and patient intercourse drawn it into the full fruition of its happiness!

The professional life of Nina, which had commenced under such brilliant auspicious, wrought many indispensable changes in her habits and associations and perhaps even her feelings. Heretofore she had lived so much in retirement that her character was as undeveloped as a child's. She was affectionate, kind and benevolent, not impatient of control, eager to learn and grateful to whoever imparted aught to her of knowledge. But this was the spiritual view of her organization. Those who had studied her carefully knew well that a lofty ambition, a scornful pride, an impatient intellect and many a fiery passion-storm lay folded in the earthly portion of her being. Upon being thrown more in contact with strangers, since her entrance upon the stage, these qualities, heretofore dormant, had been on more than one occasion called into active play. She found life behind the curtain even more deplorably hollow, vulgar and depraved than it had been represented to her, and from the first hour of her entrance upon that scene, so full of enchanting illusions to the uninitiated, she had instinctively imbibed a disgust which extended to all things and every one connected with it. This feeling she was too artless and too inexperienced to attempt to conceal, and the immediate consequence was that she became the object of the bitterest jealousy and hatred of the sisterhood of the green-room, who, from *imprimara* to chorus-girl, forgot for the once their perpetual and fierce wranglings to concentrate their forces upon the "upstart amateur" who had come among them as if for no other purpose than to show how thoroughly she considered herself above them.

Talk of the Cinq-Mars conspiracy and the gunpowder plot!—They, and all such masculine affairs, are mere pretty pastimes to a cabal of women against one of their own sex. The female bosom, home of all gentleness and kindly sympathies as it is—when the owner of the beautiful domain is permitted to have her own way in every thing—the instant she conceives an idea that a rival is to be preferred to herself, any where or by any body, becomes at once the birthplace of a hate so deadly and unscrupulous, and at the same time so cunning, that its victim, however pure or innocent, may well despair of all escape. Deprived by her unnatural and degraded social position of all responsibility for her words and acts, short of absolute felony, she knows nothing of that innate sense of honor which, even among the worst of men, is never forfeited. A woman jealous of the love or favor bestowed upon another, (whether she has any right to claim

them for herself or not,) is the most malignant and remorseless of fiends; and the Greeks exhibited their usual clear-sightedness in making the furies to consist of women who had been slighted and whose great rage thereat thirsted for the torture of all created beings. There is, of course, a class of women—angels, rather—with whom selfishness not being the leading principle of action, who take delight mostly in promoting the happiness of others; and with them rivalry or jealousy is unknown. But they are rare, and are mostly found in the quiet solitudes of domestic life, away from the glittering war of fashion, ambition and personal rivalry.

Although fashionable society, as it is at present constituted, abounds in incidents the situations calculated to develop and strengthen the growth of the worst traits in the female character—while its rewards are miserably incommensurate with the sacrifices of health, life and character it continually demands—yet it is only among professional women, after the curtain has fallen upon the scene of their glaring and hollow triumphs, that the devil of female depravity walks boldly forth in all his horrors. Then, could we be permitted to become spectators, we should be deeply impressed with the pregnant truth of Fourier's apparently whimsical conceit of the doctrine of *inversions*. For we are certain that a company of actresses quarrelling over the bouquets and garlands that have fallen promiscuously at their feet during the performance, would give any one a complete and perfect idea of inverted angels—that is, devils!

The Italian opera-house at which Nina had made her *debut* possessed in its perfection, this detestable *esprit du corps*, which rightly directed might be made to produce the most beautiful results, but which in its present state of manifestation is the bane of artist-life and the belittler of art. It seems that in the closet of the author, the studio of the painter and the green-room of the theatre all knowledge of the distinction between emulation and envy is lost, and that the base and grovelling sentiment has everywhere taken the place of the lofty and ennobling passion. Instead of ambition for the grand effects of the beautiful, our artists are only envious of each other's slightest successes; and for the glorious emulation of trying who can *do* the best they have substituted a jealous watchfulness as to who is likely to fare the best. All the pleasure arising in the artist's soul from the consciousness of having produced something worthy, is changed to bitterness if he hear of a word or line of praise bestowed on a rival. And to such absurd, such truly diabolical lengths is this carried that it not unfrequently degenerates into the fiercest and deadliest personal feud—ending even in blood and horror and death!

And yet—good God! How easy, how natural, how beautiful would it be if these artists, both male and female—these favored inheritors of the magic gift of genius, beneath whose spells a universe of enchanted delights springs up around them—could be made sensible of the high and holy trusts which have been confided to them for the well-being and the spiritual development of mankind! For it is to

the artist—the poet, the painter, the sculptor, musician, actor, orator—that belongs the task of refining and spiritualizing the race up to that point at which the magnetism of the Beautiful may pierce through their souls and hold the gold and silver of their natures steadily pointing in the direction of heaven and sunrise*. Racks and dungeons and gibbets have done their work for thousands of years, and yet their millions of victims serve not to warn mankind from vicious courses, but only to furnish evidence to sustain the false and damning doctrine of man's involuntary depravity. But the milder, the softening, the purifying influences of the Beautiful are yet to penetrate man's heart as with electric fire, refining and ennobling the gross ore till the pure and spotless gold shines out undimmed. It is alone to the fine arts—which we are taught to regard as the *useless* things of life—that we are to look for that one all embracing lesson that true life is consecrated to the useful—to that highest of all uses, providing for the good of others.

But how miserably unconscious of their high destiny appear to be the great majority of the children of art! Quarrelling over every morsel of praise—watching eagerly lest some brother or sister shall obtain a temporary advantage over them in the position of a picture or the relative size of the type in which their names are printed, toadying, beslaving their superiors while trampling scornfully to earth every new aspirant who seeks to come after them—prostituting their talent for money or personal favor—they degrade the sacred cause of art to the mercenary level of the lawyer or the mountebank, who expends his adroitest tricks and choicest grimaces to whomsoever will give him the gold for which his depraved soul longs.

Nina had suffered an abrupt and cruel change in her whole manner of existence from the moment she entered the opera-house. Her childhood, spent in happy and innocent seclusion with her father, lived in her memory only as a soft-colored dream, recalled with a tearful rapture that left a holy thrill behind. And since her residence with Mrs. Carleton she had been treated with all the tender and delicate consideration of a daughter: so that, until the commencement of her theatrical career she had never heard the voice of envy or jealousy, and was seraphically innocent of the black crime of jealousy, or even of knowing what it was. If the reader has formed any adequate idea of the the character of Adelaide Carleton he will not need to be told that among the few things of which her lofty and powerful nature was incapable were envy and jealousy. It is true that in spite of herself she loved Celio, wholly and worshipfully, as woman loves but once through eternity, and that a keen pang had invaded her heart when she discovered—or fancied—that Celio was devoted to Nina. But it was no pang of jealousy nor of envy—rather of a high and holy joy, mingled with the momentary earthly agony—

* Needles of gold and silver suspended over a powerful iron magnet point steadily to the east, or directly across the line of the earthly magnetic poles: and gold and silver are the spiritual correspondences for the two earliest and most blessed states of humanity, to which we are slowly, slowly returning.

joy that she had it in her power to make the idol of her love happy. Whether *she* was also to be happy, or for ever miserable, that was not what this glorious woman thought about. She only asked herself, Is she worthy of him? and forced to answer the question in the affirmative, her decision was already taken—the sacrifice already offered up. Nor did she for an instant think of *contending* for this man's love, more precious to her than the breath that expanded and let gently melt away again the white arches of her royal bosom. The contest, had she but willed it, had not been a hopeless one: for Adelaide's beauty was that of the Beautiful itself, and her soul was a gushing and dazzling fountain of bright thoughts and bewildering fascinations. But alas! well she knew that man's love is foreordained from the Immutable, and that all other loves but that for which he was created are but sinful lusts, however they may be hidden and perfumed by the senses and the imagination. To love Celio, therefore, other than as she had loved him before the death of her husband—even as a devoted friend and sister—was profanation and horror. Thus her love for Celio, hallowed and purified by her great self-offering, was extended also over the beautiful and lovely Italian, whom she watched with the jealous fondness of a mother and the confiding carefulness of a sister. Therefore it was that Nina had been protected through her whole life in a most unusual degree from the example or the knowledge of selfishness; and it was long before the open and palpable meanness, the coarse envy and the insolent vulgarity of her theatrical associates became sufficiently intelligible to her to convert her wonder into dismay.

Yet it must not be supposed that the young debutante had undergone no change within herself. Her transition had been great and sudden. One day utterly unknown and friendless in the world, beyond her own little home-circle—the next, the idol of the great metropolis, her name on every tongue, her praises sung in prose and rhyme by all the accredited oracles of fame—her acquaintance sought by the wealthy and the fashionable, and the inner temples of a vast and refined social aristocracy thrown open to her: here indeed was a summer change sufficient to ripen in a day the timid and budding flower and cause it to burst into full and luxuriant bloom. Pure, oh how pure, and strong and golden-blooded must be the female heart that can withstand all this! What a giddy height—whence the slightest indiscretion, the smallest mis-step, oh beautiful and favored one, will plunge thee into irrevocable ruin! Take heed, oh maiden! and pray thou in the pure silence of thy chamber to thy guardian angel to sustain thee in thy bright and dizzy path! For around and beneath are myriads of mocking demons, eager to entice thee astray and dying for thy fall.

It was the custom at the time of which we write—perhaps it is still—to admit behind the scenes certain persons, who were not slow in availing themselves of the privilege, and might be seen nightly skulking about among the properties at the side-wing, smashing their

Learys against the scenery or stumbling over the carpenters—watching for the chorus-girls as they came off the stage, and sometimes even venturing a half-abashed, half-insolent stare at the prima donna as she rushed off the stage entrance, and gathering her long robes in most uncourtly fashion about her legs, hurried to her dressing-room to prepare for going mad in white muslin and disheveled ringlets. Sometimes, hat in hand, they ventured, to approach the sacred precincts of the green-room, casting longing glances at the white lead and vermillioned beauties who lined its walls—but they seldom plucked up courage to enter. A few, apparently bolder and more favored than the rest, were however in the habit of walking directly to the green-room and nodding familiarly and patronizingly to the tenor or taking a seat confidently besides the ladies. These privileged few were either the sons of the rich old gentlemen who loaned the manager money to go on with, (for you must remember that an invariable rule of the Italian Opera in all countries is that it *must* lose money,) or else the “musical critics” of the leading journals—an editor and a millionaire being the inevitable pair of crutches upon which an opera manager hobbles through the season.

One of the former class we must describe.—His name was Henry Fitz-Clarence Stubbs—his considerate parents, with a prophetic certainty that the profits of the new soap-factory would soon raise them into the atmosphere of the “Upper Ten,” having determined to compensate their darling for the vulgarity of the family name by the grandiloquence of his baptismal appellatives. He was not more than twenty-two, yet his face had a premature old look and his shallow eye was full of lechery and deceit.—He was evidently pretty far gone in dissipation, and his musky head smelt suspiciously, notwithstanding the disgusting abundance of his polecat perfumery, of segars in his hat-crown.—His upper lip had evidently been surveyed and laid out for a mustaccio; but it might be months, or even years, before any tangible settlement of his wandering hairs could be collected there.—He wore very light yellow kid gloves—so bright as to look yellow even by gas-light—and an impudently ill-fitting sack, with long large sleeves, into which he retracted his hands very much like a gander drawing his red leg up into his belly. There was nothing whatever the matter with his eyes—except that they were totally devoid of any respectable sort of expression—still he wore a tortoise-bound eye-glass which he spent about half the time in screwing into his right frontal orbit. He wore a white vest which descended considerably below his naval, and his shirt-bosom was elaborately wrought in costly needle-work. Indeed it looked more like a lady’s tucker *a la chemise* than a masculine shirt-bosom.

The conversation of this delectable specimen of the Republican Snob was such as might be supposed to proceed from an effigy of his description. It was equally destitute of the elegance of the old-school dandy and the vigor of the genuine blood—a kind of hybrid between the b’hoys and the blackleg, which Chanfrau himself would find it

difficult to represent. His manner was compounded of equal parts of swagger, cowardice and ill-breeding—and if we add that he seldom wound up a sentence without the assistance of an oath, we have completed our catalogue of the “points” of Henry Fitz-Clarence Stubbs, Esquire. His father was, as we have hinted, a retired soap-boiler, who had built himself a classic mansion (probably deriving its Athenian tendencies from the grease whence it arose,) in Fifth avenue, which was declared in the *Evening Swashbuckler* to be in the purest style of art and calculated to exert an immense influence upon the taste for architecture throughout the United States. This mansion was built of red freestone, with painted brick ends to correspond. The entrance was ornamented by a Gothic portico supported on Ionic pillars in front, and square pilasters with Corinthian capitals behind. The window-dressings were almost pure Egyptian, (only the Egyptians had none,) and the balustrade and steps were of the Norman fashion. Altogether the mansion presented very much the appearance of several pages of architectural illustrations pasted together and congealed in freestone. Still, it was pretty well for soapgrease!

But lest we be tempted to become satirical, let us attend our young sprig of aristocracy into the green-room of the opera-house, where he is about to make his first appearance—having at length, after repeated failures, brought the manager to the sticking point. He had put it off as long as possible, but Fitz-Clarence was resolute and pertinacious, and the manager was at last compelled to submit to the imposition.

CHAPTER XVII.

MORE ABOUT MR. PIPSON AND A LITTLE WHAT HE THINKS OF HIMSELF. MR. HENRY FITZ-CLARENCE STUBBS FORGETS HIS FRENCH. NINA ACCEPTS AN INVITATION.

Among the most constant of the privileged *habitués* of the green-room was our old acquaintance Mr. Job Pipson. It is true that Mr. Pipson had the least possible idea of music, and was never so much puzzled as when trying to appear interested in it. However he had an ambition, and that was to be considered “fashionable.” The motive of this ambition was no abstract love for social enjoyment or the distinction of fashionable life. Mr. Pipson was a confirmed cynic, and the only honest sentiment, perhaps, in his bosom, was a sincere hatred of affectation. Matters of dress and etiquette, too, appeared to

him of the most contemptible significance, while they were so many bills undiscounted and such immense amounts of country money unshaved. But still Mr. Pipson was willing to spend much time and considerable money—when he could not possibly avoid it in maintaining a certain position in good society. His motive must have been, and was, a powerful one.

He was a satyr. Of this type of beings the ancients seem to have known much more than the moderns ; yet we venture to say that they are not more plentiful on the walls and vases of Pompeii than in the streets of New York ! Hundreds of respectable, sleek-coated, grave-looking men, who pass every where as respectable, and whose presence is considered quite an honor to many an aristocratic drawing-room, if they could be unmasked and stand before us in the absolute likeness of their spiritual selves, would appear but as in the suggestive image of the goat-like satyr. Mr. Pipson was one of these—a man who utterly and sincerely had persuaded himself that there was no such thing as female modesty or virtue—that every woman had her price, the difference consisting merely in their different endowment of fascinations and skill in disposing of them to the best advantage. We do not say nor mean that this was Mr. Pipson's *nature*—for let us hope that God never made any creature so utterly and abhorrently depraved. No—even Job Pipson, cunning, selfish and remorseless satyr as he was, yet had once glowed and thrilled with the divine sentiments of trusting love which hallows and refines whomsoever it touches. We have seen, in his interview with Mrs. Carleton, the day of the funeral, that even then, had it been possible for him to win the spirit who had enchanted him, his false and and miserable mask of sin would have fallen, and he might still have been redeemed. But his was a dangerous organization—and the sole redeeming element it contained being perverted and transmuted into evil, the whole being became an angel of darkness and a minister of mischief. Under his cold and circumspect exterior burned fiery passions, which had now become degraded to mere appetites that consumed his very life away ; and compelled through policy to live a life of hourly hypocrisy, withering and crushing to the best of souls, he abandoned in his secret heart all remorse, and solemnly dedicated his life and energies to the gratification of his base and brutal desires. Such a man, keen of intellect, shrewd of purpose and patient in the accomplishment of his ends—who can wait and watch and work in silence and contempt for years to secure *one* moment's triumph—is a fearful foe to the peace and virtue of society. And yet how many such stalk unknown and unsuspected among us !

Mr. Pipson, upon receiving the imperative order from Earnest to let go his hold (he had thought it *so* sure !) upon Mrs. Carleton, chafed inwardly almost to madness. He had never in his life before come so near compromising his confirmed principles of action and giving way to the fury that raged within him. But it was not to be thought of. Not only his personal safety bound him to keep in good terms

with Earnest—but he dared not disobey him, much less palter or equivocate with him. The Captain had shown him the entire folly of that. But, although he was compelled to yield back to Mrs. Carleton a large proportion of what he had hoped not only fraudulently to obtain but at the same time to make it a means of bringing the lady herself to his wishes, yet he by no means abandoned his designs upon her. All Jesuits like him understand well the uses of “mental reservation;” and he swore to himself a solemn oath that he would not die till he had accomplished the downfall of both Earnest and Mrs. Carleton—not forgetting the impertinent boy Celio, whose scornful and insulting treatment of him still burned like fire in his memory.

Meanwhile, there was time enough. He was not *very* old; and he always found that of all hair-dyes and wrinkle-smoothers, gold was the most efficacious. Indeed, such was the cordial attention with which this “first-rate match” was everywhere received by mamas and daughters that it required the aid of his looking-glass to keep him in recollection of his real appearance. But the hypocrisy with which he was greeted did not deceive him—it only made him bitterer. So, forced for a time at least to abandon his designs upon the widow of his dearest friend, he turned his attention to ascertain the exact relationship between Celio, Mrs. Carleton, Nina and Captain Earnest. After collecting all the information in his power, his conclusions were these—Mrs. Carleton was in love with Celio and Celio with Nina, and that Captain Earnest knew or cared very little about either of the ladies, except as he was moved by Celio—who, of course, he regarded as his arch-enemy in the premises, and the one who was first to be disposed of. The subsequent coming out of Nina and her consequent withdrawal from the momentary watch of Mrs. Carleton were favorable circumstances in his calculations, and he concluded to commence his operations at once.

There was in the opera company at the time of which we write—probably there is in every opera company at all times—a second prima donna, with a very large chest and a very small voice. She was a German by birth, but had added an *ina* to her name, many years ago, so that she passed with the public for an Italian: and the public had once condescended to get up *furore* on account of the beautiful Signorina Gherlandini, while as plain Frau Gorlandt she might have sung till doomsday without a hand. Her constitution still seemed to be in the very best possible order, and she herself was fully convinced that her voice, style and execution were in the same enviable condition.—Indeed, the seedy editor of the *Sunday Growl*, who was the last and most resolute of her admirers, had not long ago asserted that she was still in the very flush and hey-day of youthful triumph, and that her voice was, if possible even fresher than ever. However, the public had for many years ceased to interest itself about the matter; and when she used to come on and go off the stage in some minor part, merely thrown in by the judicious compositor to furnish the principal artists breathing-time, the audience would receive her

few wirey, broken notes with the little patient and well-bred grimace usual on such occasions,—totally forgetful of the times, “long, long ago,” when she was the popular idol, and the slightest tone of her voice or the smallest wave of her white hand sent a thrill of rapture to every bosom.

Of course, during the brief years of her triumph she had lived as extravagantly as a princess, and lavished all she received from the public as well as from her admirers, in foolish attempts to “shine,” and thus gain a position in fashionable society—where she and all her caste are merely tolerated on account of the talent they possess, and which they are always expected cheerfully to exert for the amusement of their entertainers. When her popularity waned and her charms faded, her resources failed, and her extravagant appetite and costly tastes remained; and to gratify these she was obliged to resort to one expedient after another, each less reputable than the last. Yes—with all her love of admiration and all her fiery passions undiminished by age, yet with all her powers of fascinating mankind gone, she was compelled to listen to the praises bestowed upon other women, whom she once would have looked upon with scorn. Oh, was not this a bitter, bitter task, and well fitted to change woman to a fiend! Such was the Frau Gorland, *alias* Signora Gherlandini.

When Mr. Henry Fitz-Clarence Stubbs entered the green-room to be presented to the prima donna, Mr. Job Pipson and Signora Gherlandini were sitting on a low settee at one end of the room, earnestly engaged in conversation. Now and then stealthy glances were cast by either party at Nina, who sat unconscious and abstracted near the door, waiting for the call which was to summon her to the stage. To-night she was playing the queenly *Lucrezia* and in her princess robes was indeed dazzlingly beautiful. No more ludicrous contrast to her imperial presence could be conceived than the slim and gawky Stubbs, all his impudence awed to awkwardness by the genius of the place, and the swaggering condescension with which he had intended to overwhelm the favored cantatrice tamed to the merest inarticulate whine of commonplace.

“Signorina,” said the manager, his unimpeachable Leary in hand and opera-glass peeping out from under his arm, “allow me to present to you Mr. Henry Fitz-Clarence Stubbs, one of my particular friends and the son of a very particular friend of the Italian opera.”

She partly rose and half bowed, with that difficult gesture which in any but a truly beautiful woman is positive awkwardness, and looked coldly, almost disdainfully, at the poor young man.

He had prepared himself, while stumbling through the dark passages beneath the stage on his way to the green-room, with a set speech in French, which he intended to enforce with a familiar chuck under the chin—having, for that purpose, withdrawn the yellow kid glove from his dexter hand. But he found, upon opening his mouth, that his French was frozen—not a liquid syllable would leak out: and so, like all men in sudden emergencies, he resorted instinctively to his mother tongue and habitual dialect—stammering out,

"Well, I'm blowed if you haven't taken my breath away!"

An almost imperceptible smile, ending in a shrug of disgust, passed over the face and off at the shoulders of the beautiful Italian. "Non parlo che la mia lingua," she said, quietly.

The sumph was dumfounded. "Don't speak English? Why, I had thought"—and then, recollecting himself, he commenced drumming his French forces together, and had got as far as, "J'avait cru, Mademoiselle, que"—when the lady heard the opening chord of her entering music breaking its neck against the scenery on its way up from the stage; and, rising quickly, she smoothed the skirt of her pink satin dress, and, bestowing a musical little laugh of apology upon her new acquaintance, ran out of the room. The young man stood a moment twirling his hat, twiddling his thumbs and making all the other established demonstrations of dismayed stupidity, and then started in chase after the lady.—Excited to the very extent of his capacity by the incidents of the evening, and half mad with the beauty of the fair creature who had just disappeared before him,—bewildered, too, by the strangeness of every thing about him,—he rushed down the passage between the sidewings and the wall, determined on something, he scarcely knew what. About half way to the prompter's desk he caught sight of Nina, standing on the other side of the stage, at the wing, waiting to go on; and, regardless of every thing else, he made directly towards her—crossing the stage, unfortunately in *front* of the scene and in full view of the audience. This was too much, even for the well-bred opera-tors, and a shout of laughter exploded instantaneously. Before he was half way across, Mr. Stubbs saw the scrape he had got into; and perfectly paralyzed, he stopped still, turned round, hesitated, and at length presented himself in full front view to the audience, with such a comical expression of ludicrous helplessness on his bread-and-butter little face, that the laughter was increased tenfold, and now fairly rose to shouts and screams. Genaro paused in his pathetic recitative—the Duke turned sternly round and nervously examined his dress and appointments to see if any thing was awry; while poor Stubbs, his hair positively on end with affright, after standing a moment transfixed, with his hat held before him in both hands, at length clapped it upon his head, and driving it down to his ears with a tremendous knock, made a "rushing exit O. P." the like of which has not been seen nor heard of in modern times.

But we will return to the green-room and listen a moment to the conversation of Mr. Pipson and the *passee* Signori Gherlandini.

Their consultation seemed to be drawing to a close. The gentleman rose, and gallantly pressing the hand of his fair companion, (into the palm of which he screwed a "ten-spot,") bade her adieu, saying—

"So my dear madam, I may consider that little matter as all arranged? On Thursday evening, at your house. Do not fail me."

"Never fear *me*, sir. If you play your part as skillfully as I shall mine, there will be no failure in the case."

It was a powerful combination, a dangerous conspiracy—avarice and revenge on the one side, united with hatred and lust on the other. Madame Gherlandina esteemed Nina her personal and bitter enemy, because she had dared to be younger and handsomer and more popular than herself—while Pipson hated them all,—but especially Celio, —with the cold, cautious, relentless hatred of a disappointed man, in whom all the better qualities had been curdled to poison. Aiming to strike a vital blow at the stripling who had dared to cross him, and one that should crush him forever, he had selected the beautiful Nina as the object of his attack. For well, too well, he knew the agony that proud-hearted youth endures when the object of its love is called upon to suffer. His plans were deep and adroitly laid, and he meant that the blow should be sudden and sure. After he had dishonored Nina,—and this it was that he deliberately intended, through the assistance of his female accomplice, to do,—then they might all writhe and curse their hearts full—he would laugh and mock at them! That would be *his* hour of triumph! Such were the reflections of the respectable Mr. Job Pipson as he went homeward, spurning the very flag-stones as he walked, so elated and flushed was he with the sweet anticipations of his revenge.

“That last *cadenza* was truly magnificent my dear,” said Signora Gherlandini to Nina, as the latter came off the stage from her grand *finale*, her arms filled with bouquets and garlands. “You absolutely astonished everybody by it. What a charming expression! What beautiful style! You shall be the great prima donna of the world.”

Nina, her heart fluttering with the joy of her triumph, and tuned to all gentle and kindly emotions, felt herself give way entirely beneath this unexpected praise from an artist and a rival—for her modesty still taught her to remember the renown of her companion and forget the decay of those powers which created it. Dropping her bouquets and throwing her arms round the substantial neck of her friend, she burst into tears of passionate gratitude, and could only sob,

“Oh, how good you are!”

“Not good at all, my little dear, only just—that is all. And now since we are friends at last—and we would have been so from the first, only you seemed so shy—I want you to come and see me and help us with a little old-fashioned Italian merry-making. We have an evening at my house on Tuesday. There will be no opera, you know, and you will have nothing to do.—Will you come?”

“I shall be only too happy. But then I know nobody. How shall I come?”

“Oh, I’ll manage all that. I’ll send for you, or come and get you myself, and see you safe home again. Now don’t refuse. All the artists feel hurt that you have shown so little consideration for them, and they will be delighted at this token of your good will. And a great deal depends, by dear, after all, upon the good wishes and services of the artists. Even Catalani couldn’t get on quite alone.”

"Oh, I assure you, my dear madam, that I never thought of such a thing as slighting them or thinking ill of them. Indeed"—she was about to add, naively, that she never thought of them at all; when discretion came to her aid and she desisted. "Yes, yes, my dear Signora," she added: "since you are so kind as to invite me, I will certainly come, and be very glad, too."

"Ah, that's a good girl! Now give me a kiss and good night."

Thus was one trap sprung, and the bird already caught. Bravo, Mr. Job Pipson!

But, Mr. Pipson was not a man to do things by halves. It was enough that he had Nina in his power, and thus held, as it were, the heart of Celio in his hand, and could pierce it through and through with keenest agony. Captain Earnest, too, had thwarted him in a scheme dearer than life—a scheme whose accomplishment would have had even some semblance of humanity, so intensely and with his whole soul was he engaged in it. Yes! Could he have had Adelaide completely in his power, with time and ample opportunity to work upon her magnanimity, her nobility of nature, which would, he knew, cheerfully sacrifice itself for others, he felt that he could have accomplished every thing. He could have made her love him! He could have redeemed himself from degradation in his own eyes! But now, all was over, and forever.—Nothing but hate, bitter, black, silent and deadly hate, lived in his bosom. To the infernal furies, with imprecations fierce enough to grow to tortures, he consigned them all—the loved, the hated and the indifferent—himself and all the rest. But he must be cool! He had no intention of raving away his anger and letting his victims escape. Such a thing would not be characteristic of Mr. Job Pipson. He would first get Nina and Celio and Earnest securely in his toils, and then show Adelaide that the only path for their utter and certain destruction was through her love for him. She might storm and rave for a while—but he knew her noble nature too well not to know how to play on it. At length she would relent: to save her friends she would sacrifice herself—and when this was accomplished, then he would show her those friends even more utterly ruined and destroyed than he had ever threatened—and then how sweet it would be to mock and laugh at her useless reproaches! Such were the far-reaching plans and schemes of the respectable Mr. Job Pipson.—How he proceeded in carrying them out we have already commenced tracing, in the case of Nina. But for Captain Earnest, a darker and more terrible doom was preparing.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW THE NEW PAPER GETS ON AND HOW CAPTAIN EARNEST COMES VERY NEAR GETTING INTO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT OF HIS OWN COLUMNS, AND AT LAST GETS INTO EVEN A WORSE PLACE, WITH SOME MORE VERY PROPER REFLECTIONS.

Celio and Earnest were seated in the private editorial office of the Morning Dash. The Paper, which had powerfully arrested public attention from the first, had continued to increase in power and interest, and had already become as it were a distinct power in the estate. Although its course was always bold and audacious, and sometimes not very consistent, yet there was such an air of unconscious assurance and dogmatism about it that whatever it said was sure to be heeded by the large class of the unthinking, with whom it was really regarded something in the light of an oracle. By alternately attacking all parties and public men, and exposing in turn the sophistries and hypocrisies of every popular delusion, it came at length to be regarded as essentially honest; and if there were a few who saw the game it was playing, they too much feared it to tell all they knew or suspected. Its cotemporaries of all sorts denounced it, in and out of their papers, in unmeasured terms—accusing its editor of every crime forbidden in the Decalogue, besides hundreds of others which that instrument did not contemplate—the world having grown greatly wiser in wickedness since those days. A great many pious people, too, affected to hold it in the utmost aversion and to turn up their eyes in holy horror whenever it was mentioned.—Still, the great fact remained, and even every day increased in magnitude—every body bought it, every body read it.—Hence its power. What we hear reiterated on all sides of us becomes at last, to our perceptions, truth.

“Well, Celio,” said Captain Earnest, raising his eyes from a paper he had been reading; “what do you say to the Morning Dash?—Doesn’t it answer your expectations? Are you satisfied with your position?”

“My dear Earnest,” replied Celio, in a tone of deep and earnest feeling, “I really know not how to express my sense of the burden of obligations under which you have placed me. Not only have you saved me from I know not what desperate fate, but rescued those whom I love better than life, from a fortune I cannot contemplate without shuddering. Such acts have not failed to elicit my profoundest gratitude. Still, Captain Earnest, I must confess you inspire with a sentiment even more powerful than gratitude.”

“What in heaven’s name can it be?” asked the Captain, laughing and putting his hand on his pocket—“surely it cannot be avarice!”

and he made a comical gesture as if he were begging off from a high-wayman.

"No, Captain," replied Celio, laughing also, in spite of himself, at the grotesque gestures and grimaces of his companion, "fear nothing more in that quarter. I have already made all the assaults upon your purse which my modesty will permit. At present my salary as sub-editor and factotum of the Morning Dash is amply sufficient for all my wants. I have even wherewithal to help a friend, should need be"—and he pulled out his dainty but well-stuffed *portemonnaie*.

"Thank you, Mr. Impertinence," I am not absolutely destitute. I have not yet quite exhausted the 'little present' I received from that swindling stock jobber."

"What, Old Gripes? But he has bled hard, though. I trembled at one time for the fate of the Smashtown Bank. But seriously, how do you reconcile this suppression of rascality to your conscience?"

"I am not the regularly-appointed rascal-hound of the community, who pay their thousand police-officers roundly for such services.—Every one I choose to catch and deliver up to justice is a clear gain to that portion of society which takes such pious pleasure in punishing vice—while those I let go or don't disturb are no worse than if I were not in existence. Where, then, is the harm?"

"Reasoned like David Graham or his natural adversary, District Attorney McKeon."

"But to tell the truth, I believe the crimes of those who are detected and punished are mere trifles compared with those which are never heard of. For instance, who shall compare petty larceny with seduction, or rowdyism with adultery or the ruin of a friend? And yet these are every day practices in good society, universally winked at by the tribunal of public opinion, because every body feels that he may be glad to be winked at in return."

"Amen!"

"To my sermon? So be it, you sly rogue!—And tell me how is your beautiful Nina? I am glad I have no fondness for women, or I should be trying to do you a friendly office with the charming Italian. Now don't blush and go on so—I mean nothing naughty. Plato, you know—Platonic, and all that sort of thing. But how does she really go on in the grand opera?"

"I am astonished, Captain Earnest, to discover the intensity of your barbarism. Do you not read the musical articles in the Morning Dash? I sir, even we ourself, claim the authorship of those articles."

"I beg your critical worship ten thousand pardons," exclaimed Earnest, gravely rising, pulling off his hat and making a ludicrously profound bow. "But come, leave your cursed manuscript and police reports, and let us take a stroll. I wish to introduce you to a very particular friend."

"Yes in a moment—let me just correct—or rather re-write—this 'mysterious murder,' just handed in by the police reporter. Pleasant work to read over and correct these precious specimens of composition!"

"Mysterious murder! What is it?" inquired Earnest, with a certain strangeness in the tone of his voice.

"Oh, something quite fresh and exciting—deliciously horrible. Listen: '*Mysterious and most reprehensible murder!*—Yesterday afternoon, as some laborers were digging the foundations of a new house to be erected below the old National Theatre in Leonard street, they suddenly and unexpectedly came upon a vault apparently extending into the adjoining premises, occupied by a notorious woman, which contained a large quantity of human bones. The coroner was immediately called, and with the help of several of our most eminent physicians, made out at least one entire skeleton, although the bones were in a state of partial decay, apparently from having lain in lime. A pocket-book was also found, which had almost entirely escaped decay, and contained many papers identifying it as having belonged to young Hammercloth, who it was stated at the time of his sudden disappearance, had gone to California, after having been entirely stripped at the gaming-table of the remains of his immense fortune. It is known that the deceased was on intimate terms with a noted blackleg named Keno, and the police are on his scent."

"That, at all events, must be prevented!" gasped Earnest, a deadly paleness having risen to his face and a filmy fear curdling his voice. Celio looked up, and was for a moment paralyzed by the fearful transformation that had passed over the face of his friend. The next, however, he sprang to his side, and threw his arm about him. But Earnest gently released himself from the loving embrace, and his features rapidly regained their usual composure. He gazed for a moment wistfully into Celio's eyes, and then said, slowly,

"My friend, I am glad that this has happened. I have sworn to myself never to trust implicitly to one I had not tried thoroughly. But I have trusted you only to try you afterwards, the more severely. Are you ready? Have you faith in me? Give me your hand!"

Frankly, almost joyously, was the hand extended, and tightly grasped by the other.

"Now, then, my other hand upon your heart. And now, listen! I killed young Hammercloth!"

The two hands remained firm-locked and motionless—the heart of the young man beat beneath this terrific confidence calmly as the throb of music.

Earnest, folding Celio closely in his arms; "trust on—you shall not be betrayed. I will not now insult you by a single word of explanation, but simply tell you that I am innocent and was perfectly justifiable in slaying that man—or rather, that under the circumstances I deserved praise instead of censure. This discovery, however, will lead to the most annoying consequences—among the least of which will be the bringing that malicious old villain Pipson upon my back. He knows all about it. You stare—but put that along with the rest in your big curiosity bottle, my dear boy. Every thing shall be cleared up in due time."

"But what is to be done at once?"

"Nothing. It would be easy for me to escape, but I shall not shrink from the full investigation of this unfortunate affair. Keno will probably be arrested to-night, and I must go and take his place—in the murderer's cell. I think you grow a little pale at that, Celio! But courage! All will yet be well. You shall see how truth can make itself apparent to all men. Fortunately I am not publicly identified with the paper, so that this affair will do it no injury. I smell Pipson in this affair, and had better anticipate him, if possible. Good bye! You can come and see me to-morrow.

Celio, however, taking the arm of his friend, went with him without saying a word. Once, Earnest stopped as if he would have persuaded him to return; but marking the expression of his face, the idea was abandoned, and the two friends passed on in silence.

Earnest was not too soon; as when he arrived at the Tombs an unusual stir for that hour of the evening was apparent; and upon entering the office of the Police Justice, the first sight he encountered was the over-dressed form and bland face of Mr. Ferdinand Keno, supported by a cluster of police-officers on each side. The usual self-satisfied expression of his countenance was but slightly disturbed, although a sort of dismayed helplessness was half peeping out at his eyes. He instantly descried Earnest, and held out his hands towards him eagerly, exclaiming—

"Ah, my dear friend, I knew you would come to relieve me from this cursed predicament. How good of you!"

"I have come, sir," said Earnest, walking straight up to the magistrate's desk, "to give myself up as the person who killed Stephen Hammercloth. The act was justifiable, as I am abundantly prepared to prove. Among my principal witnesses is Mr. Keno. He is in no way concerned in the affair, but knows all about it. His testimony will be destroyed or confirmed, according as he speaks true or falsely, but it is necessary he be retained. I will not be cruel enough to demand an examination to-night, because I can very well rest in a cell till morning. I shall sleep quite as soundly as in my own bed. Celio, my dear friend, go to my lodgings and leave word for Mr. Merivale to appear here in my behalf, at ten to-morrow morning.—Also"—

"You are getting along rather too fast, young man, as it seems to me," interposed the querulous justice. "Your not wishing to keep me here all night was all very proper and considerate, and much better than the general run of your high-priced criminals. But we shall not examine you till Friday. That is the earliest day that can possibly be spared. Clerk, make out a committal. What's your name?"

"Francis Earnest."

"No aliases?"

"I do not understand Latin, sir," returned Earnest, with an almost imperceptible smile.

"No insolence, sir! It will do you no good here."

"I had no intention of being insolent—but your question itself was an insult, which you had no right to offer. I am no lawyer, sir, but I know that you transcend your authority in putting off my examination. I demand that it take place to-morrow morning."

"Well, you needn't make any noise about it—we'll see. If we have time, we had as lief examine you in the morning as ever. Let it be set down for to-morrow morning, (turning to the clerk.) Now, then," he continued in a tone rather more civil than judicial, "is there anything else you would like to have done?"

"Thank you, sir—I simply request that you shall summon Charles Merivale, who is at No. — Warren street, and Job Pipson, broker, to the examination of this case to-morrow morning. I suppose Mr. Keno can go, as I acknowledge to have killed the man without abetting or assistance from any person."

"We'll take care of Mr. Keno. Officer, do your duty."

A silent grasp of hands was exchanged between Earnest and Celio—a glance in which the two men ratified once more their eternal faith in each other. Both were sad, but neither was unhappy. Great souls cannot be unhappy.

As Celio passed into the vestibule, on his way to the street, he was accosted by an individual, who, taking him behind one of the huge pillars, said, in a low voice, and with a mysterious motion of the thumb over the left shoulder,

"Don't want it mentioned in the morning papers, I suppose?"

"Want what mentioned?"

"Why, the arrest of your friend for murder.—Perhaps it'll all blow over, you know. Now I can keep it out of the whole of 'em. I report for six of the papers myself, and am on intimate terms with the reporter of the Morning Dash."

"Well."

"Well—you see—the trouble—that is the expense—for the Dash fellow is an incorrigible fellow for the black mail—"

"How much will do the business?"

"Um—Fifty dollars."

"If you will bring the Dash reporter to me, and get him to promise to suppress the report, I will give you a hundred. You'll find me at the Dash office any time till midnight."

"Who are you, then?"

"My name is Celio."

"The ———! Sold, by Jupiter!" muttered the fellow, as he turned away.

Instead of returning to his office, Celio crossed the Park, in the rear of the City Hall, and rang at the house designated by Captain Earnest as the dwelling of Mr. Merivale. Who Merivale was, Celio had no idea, except that he was a friend of Earnest, and knew something about the present case. He therefore determined to apprise him at once of what had taken place, and warn him to hold himself in readiness.

After waiting, as it seemed to him an hour at the door, it was opened by a slouchy servant, with her petticoat in one hand, and a spoon in the other. In reply to his question whether Mr. Merivale was in, the girl said, in broad Irish, that she would go and ax him.

"Do, my good girl, and tell him that a friend of Captain Earnest wishes to see him on particular business."

In a few minutes Merivale made his appearance.—Celio would have apologized for disturbing him; but Merivale assured him that anything relating to Earnest was deeply interesting to him as if it referred solely to himself.

"I have rather disagreeable news of our friend."

"Pardon me, but is not your name Celio?"

"It is."

"I knew it by Earnest's description of you. He promised to give me the pleasure of introducing me to you this very evening."

"Our friend has just introduced himself, I am sorry to say, to the head keeper of the Tombs." And Celio then went on to give a rapid history of the strange events of the evening.

"How providential," at length exclaimed Merivale, after a long pause, "that I am here! For I doubt if without my testimony he could establish the facts in the case without difficulty. The Doctor who was present on the occasion is in Europe—Keno is not at all to be relied on; and as to the old broker, I don't believe in him at all.—But all this is Greek to you. In due time you shall know all. But now let us hasten to set Captain Earnest free—for I cannot believe the magistrate will think it necessary to detain him a moment after hearing my testimony."

"It is useless to attempt any thing to-night. The magistrate at first refused to have any thing to do with the case till Friday; but, induced, probably, by the fear of a *habeas corpus*, that dire enemy of judicial tyrants—he at last consented to hold the examination to-morrow morning. Before then nothing can be done."

"So I perceive—but still I must go and see my friend to-night."

"Very good—we will go together."

They had just crossed Broadway and were about entering the Park by the central gate, when four or five men rushed suddenly upon them and threw a bag over the head of each. Then hurrying them into a carriage that stood at the curbstone, the door was closed and the vehicle drove furiously off.

CHAPTER XIX.

A TOUCH AT THE TWELFTH WARD—SPECIFICS FOR THE CHOLERA—A BIT OF MUSICAL CRITICISM. MR. PIPSON IN A NEW CHARACTER, "FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY."

THE cottage in which Signora Gherlandina resided was situated in a lonely spot in the suburbs, surrounded by open lots, rubbish-heaps, lumber-yards, and the other offal with which a large city surrounds itself as with a rampart, thrown up out of its own grave. The view to the northward and westward was bounded by a long line of Irish cabins, while the dreary intervale was interspersed with picturesquely planted mounds of filth, impregnating the atmosphere with a mingling of foul odors as Mr. Liebig or Professor Mapes would attempt in vain to analyze; and when the wind came from that quarter it was necessary to keep the windows hermetically closed, if one would avoid suffocation. Away to the eastward tall spires of black or pitchy smoke rose into the sky, from the chimneys of half-a-dozen soap manufactories, distilleries and establishments for boiling bones, which deposited a faint and putrid odor in the atmosphere, and sent death and destruction abroad throughout the whole neighborhood. To complete the miseries of these miserable regions, a law had recently been passed expelling all the hogs (those described as such in Natural History,) from the thickly-populated portion of the city, and they had consequently been collected together in immense styes in the suburbs, to still farther poison the tainted air and send their clouds of pestilential effluvia to stagnate through the streets and squares of the adjacent city. In these regions shrewd and adventurous landlords, greedy of pelf and recking not of the lives of their tenants nor of the public health, so that their coffers were well lined, have erected here and there sham buildings infested with mis-shapen porticoes and misplaced ornaments—checkered with staring diamond windows and broken out in an erysipelas of red and brown—which they advertise in the *Courier* and *Tribune* as "elegant residences for genteel families, in genteel and desirable locations, and having all the modern improvements." All citizens who "know the ropes," keep shy enough of these sporadic hospitals, with their grotesque trumpery ornaments, looking like some rare quadruped from the South Sea Islands, lying on its back with its legs sticking in the air. But strangers who come from the healthful and odor-breathing mountains of Georgia, to "spend the summer at the North," are sometimes caught in these traps, and generally leave a portion of their number behind them. For the most part, however, these dwellings are occupied by foreign musicians and artists, who, seldom being dissipated and always ambitious, have a desire to live in a genteel house although surrounded by filth and all sorts of abominations knee deep.

Such was the "beautiful little cottage" occupied by Signora Gherlandini and something less than a score of comers and goers, attached to the opera, and who constantly herd together—generally, however, in hostile little cliques and factions,—at the dwellings of such as have homes of their own.

There was, first of all, the *primo tenor assoluto*, a gentleman who opened his mouth very wide when he sang and shut his eyes proportionably tight. His principal greatness was in a pair of blacksmith's bellows which he carried beneath the vest, and his grandest effort might be termed a sort of musical gymnastics, in which he not only (to borrow a word from the critics) "attacked" his upper notes but held on to them like a cur to a pig's ear, and with nearly as musical an effect. However, nobody had ever heard any such thing before; and for fear it might be "very great," nobody dared say it was execrable. The great tenor was therefore puffed and lauded and bouquetted and ogled and dined and palavered, until his own dull brain began to conceive the idea that he really was a great man—and his airs he assumed in private and in the green-room, were even more insufferable than those he murdered upon the stage. He was walking the little parlors of Signora Gherlandini's cottage, quite abstracted in the intricacies of a cadenza he was studying for the purpose of introducing it extempore into his next evening's performances, and seemed to take no note of the little groups assembled upon and around the chintz settees, lounges and ottomans. The hostess herself was in great force, and the pale blue silk dress was cut lower and beflounced more heavily—and we venture to say contained more yards of material—than ever before fell to the lot of pale blue silk slip. Her cheeks were as red as peonies, and her whole face was lighted up with a rosy glow. Her eyes—even age respects the eyes of pretty women—were still large and clear, and liquid, and orientally oval as ever, and at a little distance, when standing still, she was yet that most desperate of bankrupts, "a very fine women for her age." What that was is not recorded in any almanac with which we are familiar. She was seated on an ottoman near the center of the room, with the maestro dell' orchestra and the comprimaria, the mother and sister of the second tenor's wife, and two or three of the leading chorus-girls. The principal baritone had been a barber in St. Petersburg, although he too became transmuted into an Italian when he jumped over the footlights, and now sported a genuine "ano" at the end of his name. But his especial glory was in a pair of soft, silken, shining black whiskers. Most of his leisure time was spent in oiling, combing and curling these splendid ornaments, in which he showed plainly that the world had lost a superb hair-dresser when he leaped the foot-lights—whatever it might have gained in the way of a singer. Little, however, did he care of the opinions of others—he was far too well satisfied with himself to be troubled by any outside judgments. On the stage he was ever and always Figaro—Figaro here, Figaro there, Figaro every where. And as it chanced that the

taste of the public—or rather the calibre of the company—just then rendered *opera seria* all the go, poor Signor Krakoffano invariably cut the most ludicrous figure imaginable. But if he was a curiosity on the stage, he was a veritable spectacle in the drawing-room. His face was unobjectionably handsome, and he seemed to keep it, as well as his whiskers, continually lubricated with olive oil, which gave it a peculiar, yellowish look very characteristic and succulent. He was at the present moment doing the honors to the hostess and her bevy of beauties. They were all very earnestly engaged in conversation, and all speaking at once—every one almost in a different dialect of the “bella lingua”—which is almost as much cut up as the stuffing of Bologna sausages. Indeed, had one not acquainted with the peculiarly energetic and gesticulatory manner of conversation universally employed by foreigners, looked in upon this assemblage, he would have imagined that it was a hostile consultation very likely to end in bloodshed.

One by one the company came dropping in, until the rooms were nearly full. All at once a little bustle took place in the hall, and Nina entered, accompanied by Signor Sartori, formerly the wardrobe-keeper of a second-rate theater in Paris, but now advanced to the honors of second tenor of the Italian Opera of the United States of North America. He was a fat, light-haired German, and loved nothing but sour wine and sauer-kraut. So—as his wife wasn’t at all jealous of him—a very rare thing, I can tell you, to say of an Italian or any other wife—he had been despatched to bring Nina to the scene of action.

And now for the first time during her remembrance she found herself domiciled as it were among the members of her own profession—each trying to outvie each other in the extravagance of his professions and the grotesqueness of his demonstrations—for when a woman really undertakes to be civil, you may think yourself lucky if you are not eaten up on the spot. They were all so happy that she had at length come among them—they had suffered so keenly from the absence of the brightest ornament of their profession—they were glad indeed to have so fair an excuse for still being proud of Italy—*povera Italia!* The baritone rose as she advanced into the room; cut a caper with a chair which he balanced on the toe of his north-east leg, while it spun a minuet with the grace of Cerito and leaped gracefully in front of Nina, inviting her to be seated while the barber—we mean the baritone—grinned and looked as amiable as if he had just seated a rich customer and were about saying, “shave you in a minute, sir!” The *maestro dell’ orchestra* and the *maestro de’ cori* sprang forward at the same moment to pay their respects; and coming from opposite directions, their heads met in the center with force enough—not to do any material damage of either, but to send them each reeling several paces backward to his seat again, while Nina, strange and uneasy as she felt in a position so completely novel to her, could not forbear a hearty laugh. This did more to break the ice than

could have been accomplished by hours of management and calculation. There is something in an innocent woman's laugh that melts all hearts, as the voice of Spring unlocks the frozen lakes and streams, and sets every thing gushing and dancing to sweetest music. Even the *primo tenor assoluto* paused in the two hundred and seventeenth rehearsal of the improvised cadenza with which he was on the next evening to electrify the critics and enrapture the ladies. Turning in the direction whence that fountainous laugh was leaping, he immediately hurried to pay his allegiance to the queen of the evening—which he did with an air and accent of the profoundest sincerity. It is wonderful, the *sincere hypocrisy* of professional life. Necessity, the degradation of abominable conventionalism and the miserable selfishness and competition of their profession, generally have made them jealous, envious, malicious and overbearing; but in their social *manner*, in their tone of voice and speaking eye, and in the pantomime of the body, which more than all else betrays the real feeling of the heart within, there is ever present the natural, inextinguishable aspiration for universal love and brotherhood. No people are so profoundly affectionate, none so absurdly fickle, as they: none are so innately delicate and well-bred, yet few more coarsely impudent—none more cruel, none so tender-hearted. They are made of positive qualities and their opposites—and as they are born, reared, live and die in a state of utter and absolute inversion, it is almost inevitable that the opposites of their good qualities should alone act, while those qualities themselves are seldom suffered to appear.

Every thing was now in readiness, and fun was the order of the evening. A company of school-children turned out for a holiday could no sooner nor more completely have forgotten all their quarrels, jealousies and heart-burnings than they. Various games were proposed, but all gave way to the hostess, who suggested that most Italian and delightful play called *La Musica Magica*. The method of carrying on this game deserves describing.

The *maestro dell' orchestra* having taken his seat at the piano, the play began. One of the company retired outside the door while a consultation went on as to what particular thing he should be required to do on his return. At length, after considerable discussion, it was settled upon and the necessary direction communicated to the pianist. All now assumed a grave and demure aspect—the hostess clapped her hands, and the pilgrim (it was the inevitable second tenor) re-entered. He was evidently an old hand at his business, and went to work systematically.

Now the idea is that whenever the guesser approaches the person or the object with which or whom his task is connected, the music gradually grows softer and softer; and if he continue to go right, it dies away into silence, and the task is accomplished. But the moment he makes a false step, looks in a wrong direction or touches a wrong object, the music snaps out fiercely its displeasure; and if the bewildered guesser still goes wrong the piano gets up an excite

ment directly and growls and roars like a menagerie.—Signor Sartori, however, was, as we have said, an old hand; and commencing in the corner nearest the door, he took hold of a shawl which hung across the arm of a sofa. The music lulled away serenely; but it burst out furiously when he attempted to put the shawl round his own shoulders. Finding that this wouldn't answer, he offered to wrap it about the fair form of the hostess—but that was no whit more satisfactory to the piano; and it was not until Signor Sartori had invested the shoulders of the pianist himself with the shawl that his fingers paused and lay silently upon the contented ivory.

The ice being now fairly broken, the fun went on with increased gusto. One after another, men and women, all had enacted their pilgrimages, except Nina and an elderly, quiet-seeming gentleman, who had glided in noiselessly but a little while before, and taken a seat in a darkened corner, where he could watch every thing that went on, without being himself scarcely seen or noticed. Nina indeed had not seen him at all. Now, however, the hostess brought him forward to take his turn at guessing, and Nina recognized the old man whose keen face and cunning eyes, had so often made her shudder in the Green-Room when she saw them turned upon herself, while their owner seemed to be intently listening to Signora Gherlandini. The first time she encountered him in the theater she experienced an unpleasant sensation, as if she had met him before and under painful circumstances. But she could not recall the circumstances to her mind, and had only continued to regard him as an unpleasant, perhaps noxious animal, whenever she had accidentally encountered him in the Green-Room or about the wings. He seemed to be the avowed admirer of Signora Gherlandini and with perhaps half a smile, at their mutual forbearance and good taste, she dismissed them from her thoughts. Now, however, Mr. Pipson was encountered in a more decided manner.

"Signorina," said the hostess, bringing Mr. Pipson forward, who seemed shy and uneasy, "this is my particular friend, Mr. Pipson—Mr. Pipson, *La Signorina*—for such indeed she deserves to be called."

"I hope, madam," said Pipson, bowing to the ground, and holding his hat by both hands over his heart, "that you will permit me to express to you how much I was delighted, the other evening, at your treatment of that insufferable coxcomb young Stubbs. It was exactly what he deserved. His father, my dear madam, commenced life as a soap boiler.—I know it."

Nina instinctively feared and hated this man—why she did not stop to ask herself—and she felt an unconquerable disposition to say something bitter and contemptuous to him. It was not her nature—she had never desired to do so before to any human being. But she could not repress her present impulse.

"Were you then an old acquaintance of his in the soap-boiling business?" she inquired, with so much simplicity that Pipson, sharp as he was, never suspected that she was laughing at him.

"Oh no, I am not quite old enough for that," he at length replied.

"I am very glad of that," she continued, in the same careless, childlike tone and manner, "for I hate old people—don't you hate old people, Mr. Pipson?"

"Ye-es—that is, most old people," stammered out the antiquated lecher, smoothing his forehead with his hand and settling his wig with an energetic jerk at the ears. "But then you know my dear young lady, that we are all liable to get old. Even you and I must grow old some day."

"I deny that."

"How are you to prevent it, Signorina? If you would make me worship you outright, you have only to tell me your beautiful secret."

"By dying while I am young. As for you,—but excuse me, the play is stopped. Whose turn is it? Quick, quick!"

"It is your turn, pretty one," said the hostess. "So set your wits at work, for we mean to puzzle them if possible."

But it was not possible. Upon re-entering the room, she listened intently to the music a moment, as if she could read in its mystic sounds the thoughts of the player: then, walking directly up to Pipson, while the music murmured in dying tones its acquiescence, she stopped it front of him and began looking at him in a comical sort of puzzle. But this lasted only a moment. Seeming to have divined what was required of her, she caught Pipson by the hand and began whirling round the room in a bewildering waltz, while the old fellow, taken all aback by the suddenness of the assault, could only hold fast to his wig with his disengaged hand, and endeavor now and then to recover his equilibrium.

This laughable performance, which Nina appeared to enjoy to the full, closed the entertainment of the evening, and the company soon began dispersing. Upon looking for the second tenor, it was ascertained that he had as usual got too much *vin rosso*, and had been taken home by his wife. The other gentlemen had disappeared; and so Nina was perforce compelled to accept Signora Gherlandini's pressing invitation to stay until morning. However, she almost wept when she remembered poor Mrs. Carleton and how unhappy and sad that dear friend would be when she found that her willful charge did not return. But there seemed to be literally no help for it.—The house was lonely and far away from cabs or conveyance of any kind, and it was already past midnight. So, swallowing down her vague yet pressing forebodings, she took the candle from the hand of the hostess, who had attended her to the door of her bed-room, and bidding her good night, timidly, almost sadly entered.

CHAPTER XX.

A NIGHT ADVENTURE—A POLICE OFFICER AND GRATITUDE.

When Merivale and Celio were thrust into the cab, they were at first so completely paralyzed by the suddenness of the event as to lose for an instant their presence of mind. Involuntarily grasping each other by the hand, they remained for a few moments in silence; and at length, by a reversion not unnatural to gay spirits, Merivale and Celio burst simultaneously into a laugh, exclaiming, "what the devil, Celio! what does all this mean?" "I am sure," replied Celio, "that I would give any reasonable sum to be able to answer that question; but time, the ancient enemy of the Sphinx and all her progeny of riddles, will doubtless solve this one if we only have a little patience."

"Yes," replied Merivale, "that is true enough; but what has become of Captain Earnest all this time? Remember that his liberty and perhaps his very life must be decided in a few hours."

For more than an hour they rode swiftly over the stony pavements, exhausting the time in fruitless speculations as to the cause of their sudden arrest, and more especially as to who could be its author. They were not long in coming to the conclusion that some one, an enemy to Captain Earnest, must be at the bottom of the movement, and that its purpose was to prevent the appearance of Merivale at the examination which was to take place the next morning. Earnest however was in the constant habit of so surrounding his movements with mystery, that nothing definite nor satisfactory came to assist their vague surmises. At length the carriage stopped and the door opened, while two men appeared at either side, one bearing a dark lantern. The other who seemed to be the master of ceremonies on this curious occasion, was a short, bunchy little man, with a cracked voice, and a peculiar system of gesticulation, like a piece of machinery out of order; in short, this short little man was no other than our old and bunchy friend, Mr. Bunch himself. Pitching his voice at the height of its soprano register, he ordered the two gentlemen to alight and follow him. Celio reached his head out of the carriage, and seeing but two men in charge of them, withdrew for an instant, and whispered to his companion that they had better make a dash for it.

"I do not think you had better do any such thing, my covey," immediately interposed Mr. Bunch, "because as how you see, though we aint but two on us, this here little revolver stands for as good as six more;" and he pointed a patent six-shooter at the head of our somewhat dismayed friend.

Seeing how matters stood, the two gentlemen concluded wisely that

resistance would be worse than useless ; and recalling to mind the power of address and cultivated intellect over the brute creation, including that most brutal of all animals, a brutal man, decided to wait the course of events and employ every other means before resorting to force. They therefore quietly left the carriage and followed the redoubtable Mr. Bunch, who, by way of precaution, backed himself in front of them, holding the six-shooter at arms length, into a low, dark, dreary-looking little house. From the appearance of the neighborhood, as well as could be ascertained by the misty beams of a gas-lamp or two, dying away in the distance, they must have been riding round and round in the heart of the city, and had at last alighted at a den in the vicinity of the Five Points. Entering the front door, which the companion of Mr. Bunch, who brought up the rear, carefully barred behind them, they were ushered into a dismal, squalid little apartment, resembling more a cavern under ground, sacred to toads and newts, than any thing intended to answer the purposes of a human habitation. A plain wooden bench, divaning one half of the rough-cast wall, constituted the entire stock of movables with which this room was ornamented. Upon this bench Celio and Merivale seated themselves, while Bunch, his revolver still in his hand, dismissed his companion, gathered the skirts of his policeman's coat about him, drew his India rubber cap over his face, and crouching dog-like in the opposite corner, prepared for the night's watch.

After a few minutes of profound silence, Merivale, pressing his friend's hand, as if to make magnetic communication of the thoughts that were passing through his own brain, commenced the grand assault upon the outworks of the human citadel named Bunch, standing (or rather sitting) between them and their liberty.

"My good friend," said Merivale, in a pleasant, chatty voice, "this is devilish cold and uncomfortable ; dark and dreary too. Don't you think it would be possible to raise a little something to warm the inner man ? A mug of punch, for instance, or even a bottle of brandy, would not be amiss, and we should be very happy for you to join us in a little indulgence of that kind. We know it is late, and the shops are probably all shut ; therefore, if a little trifle of fifty dollars or so should be necessary, why, of course, we won't object ; only go and get us something to eat and drink, if possible, at all hazards."

"Well now," replied Bunch, "you must think I am mighty green. Where do you s'pose I was born, that I am to be sold arter that sort of fashion ? To set your minds at ease, I'll just tell you that nothing short of a cool five hundred would begin to bring you out of this scrape, and I reckon there aint no particular danger of your having such a thing about you."

"I see you have been well paid for your infamous job," retorted Merivale, "and I suppose you have managed things so as to avoid the danger of discovery ; but look out ! The devil does not always stand by his children, but often leaves them at the very moment when

they have the most need of his diabolical assistance. I'll give you one hundred dollars, if you will take your ugly corporation out of our presence and keep it invisible to us for the space of ten minutes; otherwise we must remain and all abide the consequences."

"It won't do, gentlemen," replied Bunch doggedly, "so there aint no use o' talkin about it any more. You writes a mighty pretty hand but the liquor can't come."

"Stop," said Celio, now speaking for the first time; "I have but little cash about me, it is true, but it may be we can arrange this matter satisfactorily. You are, as I suspect, either a thief or a police officer; not that it makes much difference which, but one or the other I am sure you must be. No body else could have been hired to perform so atrocious an act as that of which you have been guilty. Now mark me; a man of high standing and great influence, a man well known, and with innumerable friends, in every class of society, is unjustly detained at this moment in the Tombs, on accusation of murder, from which the testimony of my friend here would instantly clear him. This accusation is evidently the result of a deep-laid and damnable conspiracy against the honor and life of my friend. The only purpose of our arrest, in this infamous manner, is to prevent the testimony which would clear my friend of every imputation. After the mischief has been done, we shall be set free, and you will have made yourself, for five hundred dollars, the murderer of an innocent man. Now if you will permit us to depart, I will pledge you our honor as gentlemen, that never again will we recall the incidents of this night, and beside will give you an order on Captain Earnest, the man now unjustly held in custody, for five hundred dollars, in addition to the one hundred which my friend just now offered you, which order will be instantly cashed upon presentation to-morrow morning. If you refuse this offer, I swear to you, by every thing which men hold sacred, that, if you don't murder us while you have us in your power, you shall be brought to justice and held to a strict account for the whole of this nefarious transaction."

"What's that you say," said Bunch, suddenly starting up and standing erect before the friends. "Didn't you say something about Captain Earnest?"

"Yes, to be sure I did," replied Celio; "he is the man who has been unjustly accused of murder, and Mr. Merivale here, my friend, is the only man whose testimony can at once and for ever acquit him. Do you take my offer?"

"Earnest! Captain Earnest, accused of murder," repeated Bunch, in an abstract tone and manner, as if rather speaking to himself than replying to the other; "why Captain Earnest once saved my life. Yes I'll do it!" and then suddenly checking himself, as the old professional spirit of self came over him, he said to Celio: "I accept your offer. Give us the order and the hundred dollars, and I am your man. Old Pipson may be damned, for what I care. I'll

not only do right, but I'll be paid for it. That's what I call doing the business up brown."

The transaction was soon concluded, and the two friends, accompanied by Bunch, left the house and proceeded up the street. Bunch inquired of them where they would be taken, and advised, as it was already late, and nothing could be done till morning, that they should either return home or take lodgings at a hotel, while he would keep watch during the night, and, at the first sign of business stirring in the Tombs, would call them and all would be on hand to release Captain Earnest at the earliest possible moment. This advice appeared excellent; and for this purpose of being near the scene of action and of losing no time in the morning, Merivale and Celio adjourned to the Carleton House and went to bed.

CHAPTER XXI.

A NIGHT IN THE TOMBS—THE KEY TO THE STAR CHAMBER.

Captain Earnest, to whom we now return—was a man, as our readers will by this time have learned, not easily daunted by the most extraordinary or unexpected events, and to whose powerful soul dismay never came. Yet with the iron nerve that sustained him under every circumstance, and supported too, as he was by the consciousness of innocence, and the almost certainty of being early released from his annoying position, the moral atmosphere that floats around and interpenetrates that Gehenna of Christian civilization, the felon's cell, wrought something of its paralyzing and depressing spell, even upon the elastic organization of him who now sat upon the little truckle bed, leaning his head against the cold stone wall, and lost in wild distempered fancies.

Murder! Horrible, doleful word, conjuring up like the syllable of some potent enchantment, dire trains of moving and gibbering phantoms who weave demoniac dances through the brain. Innocence itself, and courage, and all high resolve quail and shrink before this terrible word, this crushing accusation; and for a time, even the proud soul of Earnest shrank back within itself, not daring to encounter face to face the danger by which it was menaced. Gradually, however, these foul illusions faded away, like the intense and palpable darkness by which he felt himself surrounded. The spiritual eye, even like the bodily, seems to possess the wonderful power of contracting or dilating its pupil, to correspond with the degree of light wherever it may be placed, and ultimately to scan, with its intelligent beams, every nook and crevice, one by one, of the dreariest and darkest dungeon. Earnest, whose mind, like his body, acted rapidly

decisively, energetically, in every direction, arriving suddenly and intuitively at the most foregone conclusions, soon regained complete control of himself and smiled as the phantasms of his fears fled through the grates of his stony cell. He even, after a few moments spent in that inward prayer which asks not the kneeling aid of the mortal body, laid himself upon his hard prison couch and slept sweetly and peacefully the sleep that innocence alone can know.

And now the gray morning unfolded its heavy wings, dripping with the dark waters of the sea of night, above whose waves it rose dim and welcome. Soon and wide grew the light over all the silent city, which, like the fabled Memnon began to murmur beneath its beams. The old gray Tombs, fit residence of gloomy horrors, now felt the stir of morning, and began to be alive through all its dark arcades and stony labyrinths. The sleepless felon, turning all night upon his pillowless bed, leaped eagerly upon the floor that he might gaze through the little aperture of his cell once more upon the light of day. The drunken men and women, who, during the night, gathered from gutter and sidewalk, had been thrust to sleep away the fumes of their poisonous debauch, in the general loafers' hall, began stirring like swine waking from their morning nap. The sleepy policemen, one by one, made their appearance and yawned their morning salutation to the thin and meagre magistrate who, "spectacle on nose," seated himself on his dread tribunal, and the morning levee of loaferism began. Blear-eyed vagabonds, filthy, drunken women still reeling from the orgies at which they were interrupted, and every grade of humanity that is below the lowest form of beast, were there congregated, in foul and leprous array, waiting, some to be sent where civilization rewards her drunken vagabonds with comfortable subsistence, while she leaves her virtuous slaves and Helots to starve and freeze; others, who were so fortunate as to have a little money in their pockets to bribe their way from magistrate down through policemen and reporter, to the street; and others, who belonged to the "respectable classes," to be dismissed with a genteel and polite request that they should do so no more.

This scene over, the more important and serious business of the day commenced in the general judgment room up stairs. Here some farther show of magisterial authority appeared in the arrangements and dispositions of the apartment. The prisoners were decorously separated from the judge by a wooden wall, and a palisade of wooden bars ran between the space occupied by the judge, the policemen and their victims, and that thrown open to the general public. After disposing of a large number of ordinary cases in the ordinary manner, the magistrate put himself into an attitude of extra magisterial dignity and whispered to his confidential clerk.

"Yes, yer honor," replied the obsequious clerk, "I suppose we can proceed with that now; but here's a note from Captain Earnest, requesting a private examination."

"No!" indignantly returned the magistrate, drawing himself up

to his "full hight," as the novelists say; though for the life of us we never could exactly ascertain the definition of that most romantic phrase; and looking as if the whole body of the ermine, from Lord Jeffrey's to the present time, were insulted in his single person, and and he were called upon to resent it all. He, however, took the note and carelessly opened it. But no sooner had the enclosure contained in the envelope met his eye, than he hastily concealed the note beneath the desk, and carelessly crushing it in his hand, put it accidentally into his pocket. A sinister smile passed over the face of the obsequious clerk, which, however, had entirely disappeared by the time his superior had looked up.

"By the way," remarked the judge, in a bland voice, "Mr. Inkem, you say Captain Earnest avows his innocence, and merely desires a private examination, for the purpose of saving his reputation from the damage it would unjustly suffer if he is brought into public. Well, well, I think we must grant it. Captain Earnest I have known to be a reputable man, and can scarcely doubt his ability to prove his innocence of this dreadful, and, I may say, rather inconvenient charge."

Dismissing the rest of the culprits, the magistrate proceeded to the Star Chamber, with his friend Inkem, and directed the police officer to conduct Captain Earnest before him. In a few minutes Earnest made his appearance, looking calm and confident, and took a seat without embarrassment, but without bravado, avowing his readiness to hear the evidence upon which he had been accused, and stating that he expected to be able in a few minutes to abundantly clear himself of the suspicions that existed against him.

The first to be examined were several policemen, who swore positively to the character of the house, where the bones had been found, and stated that farther examinations had been made, which, however, had led to no important discoveries. There seemed to have been built into the back part of the house, a sort of pit, which was apparently filled with quick-lime, the property of which is to utterly destroy all traces of flesh subjected to its action. No one could therefore tell how many murdered bodies had been, in time past, thrown into this Golgotha; while the imagination of the policemen did not fail to invest it with the most incredible horrors.

After the examination of the policeman in chief had been concluded, the magistrate turned to Captain Earnest, and informed him that, although somewhat against the rules, in preliminary examinations, yet he was at liberty to cross-examine the witnesses. He however declined.

The girls found in the establishment, who had all been arrested and detained as witnesses, were now called; but none of them had been in the house more than a few weeks, and they knew nothing of the incidents connected with the present event. The mistress herself was then called, but was as ignorant of the circumstance as the others; protested the entire respectability of her house, and mani-

festated considerable first-rate indignation at being implicated in such a dreadful affair.

The examination had already consumed some time, and the morning was wearing away ; yet there were no signs of Celio and Merivale—and Earnest began to turn uneasily toward the door.

The magistrate now observed that all the witnesses had been heard, and stated that, as Captain Earnest had admitted the homicide, it remained for him to prove distinctly that it was a justifiable one, and in positive self-defence, or he should be compelled to commit him for trial. At this moment, a noise outside, in which loud voices in dispute were heard, and a shuffling of feet upon the floor, as if some one was forcing his entrance against the policemen who guarded the door of the Star Chamber, attracted the attention of its inmates. In an instant after, Celio and Merivale rushed into the apartment, followed by Bunch, who had thus faithfully kept his promise, and brought the friends to the assistance of Earnest at the critical moment. The reason of their appearing so late was that the policemen at first refused to admit them, telling them that nothing was going on, and that the magistrate had not yet arrived.

Mr. Merivale was now sworn and examined. He gave so clear and explicit a description of the manner in which the young profligate met his death, and maintained his statement beneath the sharpest examination of the magistrate with so much calmness and self-possession, that not a doubt could remain of its complete and exact truth. After a few inquiries as to the name, occupation, position, and so forth, of the witness, the magistrate fully discharged Captain Earnest from arrest, and added an expression of his regret at the unjust suspicions to which he had been subjected, and his sincere congratulations at the result.

Mr. Bunch here demanded to be heard ; and going forward, stated to the magistrate that he had a confession to make, implicating a very respectable citizen in the crime of conspiracy to take the life of Captain Earnest, and deprive his friend Celio and Merivale, of their liberty. Being sworn as state's evidence, he deposed that he had been bribed by one Job Pipson, in the sum of five hundred dollars, to carry off Celio and Merivale, and keep them in close custody, at all hazards, for a certain number of days. He also confessed to being cognizant of Pipson's plan respecting Nina, and informed them where she was that morning to be, adding, that if they would save her they must be in haste. Without waiting for farther words, and taking Bunch with them as their guide, Earnest, Merivale and Celio precipitately left the office, and hurried to the rescue of the fair Nina.

CHAPTER XXII.

VIRTUE IS STRENGTH. THE OLD SERPENT.

It is no longer fashionable to laugh at the idea of premonitions, which visit the minds of certain persons of peculiar organization, previous to many important events which they are about being called upon to pass through. Once it was the fashion to ridicule everything but what could be seen, felt, or in some manner realized, by the animal senses; but, among the other great achievements of the present age has been the almost simultaneous discovery, by all thinking and reasoning beings, that man is endowed with a spirit as well as with a body, and that the organs of that spirit may reasonably be supposed to possess the power of communicating with external events, as well as those of the body; beside, premonitions have from time immemorial been known to be true, by those to whom they came. Many who read these pages will themselves be able to recall moments of their lives, in which their being was overshadowed by some great event, and the consciousness of which became thenceforward a part of their very existence. Women are more susceptible to these influences than men, because their natures are now electric, and gather from the surcharged clouds of events by which they are surrounded, prophetic shudderings of the storm about to break above their heads.

As Nina closed the door that separated her from the noisy scene she had just left, the outward world seemed to fade away from her very memory, and her soul trembled beneath one of those premonitions of which we have spoken. Vague, dim, and uncertain in its gloomy vastness seemed the horror that threatened her with a more real feeling of positive fear and dread than any actual danger to which she had ever found herself exposed. For a moment a visible tremor passed through her whole frame, and she stretched forth her hands as if to support herself from falling. But this passed away, and bowing her head upon her bosom, she threw herself in an attitude of abandonment upon the bed, and gave way to a passionate fit of weeping. She knew no reason for this, for she was not childish enough to really suffer fear or loneliness, or the apprehension of danger, merely from being separated for a single night from her home, and the protecting presence of Mrs. Carlton; and nothing had occurred during the evening to inspire her with alarm. Yet still she wept, she knew not why, and it was in vain that for some moments she attempted to struggle against the paroxysm and to regain possession of herself. At length, however, the tempest exhausted itself in tears. Gradually her sobs became weaker, and were heard at longer intervals; and finally, rising, she stamped her little foot with a ges-

ture of impatience and self-disdain, and drying her eyes, proceeded calmly to perform the little offices preliminary to seeking repose. She had partially disrobed her beautiful limbs, and, as was her custom, knelt at the foot of the bed to say her nightly prayer, when she was startled by a light tapping at the door. For a moment her heart beat quick; but thinking it could only be her hostess, who had forgotten something she wished to say to her, or desired to give her some direction, she went to the door, and, putting her lips to the key-hole, inquired "Who's there?"

"It is me, only me," answered some one in a whisper; and not thinking for a moment that it could be any other than her hostess, Nina opened the door, and in glided Mr. Job Pipson. With a slight scream, Nina rushed to the bed, snatched a blanket, and enveloping herself in it from head to foot, turned upon the smooth-faced and smiling Pipson, whom she had not yet recognized, and demanded what he wanted there.

"Pray, my dear madam," replied Mr. Pipson, with the most imperturbable politeness, and with a voice he meant should be most especially insinuating, "Pray be cool, and do not allow yourself to be put out in the least. I have a few words which I wish to say to you, and as I have not succeeded in the course of the evening in obtaining an opportunity of conferring with you alone, I have taken the liberty of making the present occasion. I beg your pardon, and I am sure almost you will grant it, when you hear how much to your own advantage is what I have to propose."

"But Mr. Pipson, good Heavens! How came you here? Do you not know!"—exclaimed Nina, pointing to the door?

"Yes, beautiful creature," replied Pipson, in the same tone and voice, "I know everything. I know more than you know, and I came to tell you many things of which you have not the slightest suspicion. Among others, I beg respectfully to inform you that you are the most beautiful woman in the world; and that I venture to say, is an idea that never entered your pretty head before. Now that is but the beginning, however, of what I have to say. Will you listen?"

"Mr. Pipson, by what right do you presume to be thus insolent? Is it because I am absent from my friends and unprotected? Or have I been so unfortunate as to give you some cause for thus daring to intrude upon my privacy? In what respect have I been wanting in a decorous observance of every propriety of life? Or is it that you thus basely presume upon the common reputation of my unfortunate profession—a reputation for which you and such as you are more to blame than the weak-minded creatures who become your victims? But if you have chosen to rank me with such, let me say, once for all, that you are fatally mistaken. I can scarcely attempt to conceal from myself the insulting, the outrageous character of this visit."

"Now my dear madam," replied Pipson, with his voice and manner even more seductive and polite than before, "I began by desiring you, in the most persuasive manner I could assume, not to put

yourself in a passion; not but what a passion becomes you charmingly, as it does every woman, by the by—a fact, of which most of them I believe, are conscious enough. But at present it is out of place. I wish simply to have some quiet, pleasant, and I trust mutually profitable conversation with you. I hope you don't find me so much of a monster, as to refuse me the simple courtesy of a few minutes conventional dialogue. I am at least as handsome as the Russian Baritone, with whom you are forced to hold such loving dialogues upon the stage."

Nina shuddered before the demoniac self-possession of this man. "Go on," said she, her teeth chattering with a nameless horror: "I listen."

"Ah! that now is something like it," replied Pipson, "though you appear to be cold. Suppose you take another blanket and put it over your shoulders. True, they might not appear so fascinating as at present, peeping out mischievously from their dainty night-robe; but I presume they would be a vast deal more comfortable."

"What is it you have to say, Mr. Pipson?" said Nina, in a hollow whisper, shrinking as far from him as to the very wall of the room.

"Oh! there's no hurry," replied Mr. Pipson. The night is young yet, and we have plenty of time. In the first place I love you, and, as a corollary to that same proposition, I have determined to possess you. In the next place—I see you are already interested in my little talk, and in the next place, then, you abhor me and are determined to have nothing to do with me. Do you understand, my pretty charmer?"

"Yes, yes; go on," whispered Nina, almost gasping for breath.

"Then, thirdly, and to conclude, as my learned friend Dogberry says," resumed Pipson, his eyes sparkling with concealed hate, mingled with the delight of anticipated triumph; "you love my especial and particular young friend Celio, the *protege* of my other especial friend, Captain Earnest, whom, by God's good pleasure, I shall soon have the happiness to see hanged. You find this charming, do you not?"

"Man!" almost shrieked the now utterly aroused and terrified Nina; "what would you? Is this madness?"

"Madness, my dear? Why bless you, no! I never was more completely in possession of my faculties in the whole course of my life; although, to confess the truth, the sight of so bewitching a creature as you, carefully packed away in two blankets, is enough to set one's blood running a little wildly through his veins, even though he were approaching the fifties. Well, my charmer, what have you to say? Not a word to your devoted lover, who chivalrously and romantically seeks you out to declare his love in the dark hours of midnight?"

"Mr. Pipson, I implore, I beseech you to end this horrible scene. What is it you would have?"

"Certainly, my dear, we are coming to that directly. It is simply

this ; I would have *you* ;” and throwing off the mask, his voice assumed its naturally harsh and grating tone. “ Yes, madam, I would have you—nay I *will* have you—but I would have you on fair and easy terms. I hate scenes, except those pretty ones which you term, in your own language, *scenas*, and which you sometimes get up professionally, and by the help of the Russian Baritone aforesaid. Therefore it is that I have come to make you this offer, and mark me well ; every syllable I utter is as true as the four Gospels boiled into one ; and, by all that you or I, or angels or devils, can consider holy and sacred I swear not to depart one jot nor tittle from what I am now about to declare to you. I hold in my hand the life of Captain Earnest, and a word of mine can blast the reputation and ruin forever and past redemption the prospects of your lover, Celio. When they are gone, your protector, too, Mrs. Carleton, damn her !” and he ground his teeth with passion, “ will be utterly in my power. In a word, with one gesture of my arm, I can sweep them all to swift destruction ; and I will do it, unless the pretty Nina here lays down her honor at my feet, and sweras to be mine and mine alone. On that condition they shall all be saved. Without it they shall all be damned, without redemption. Choose, but choose not hastily. I ask not your decision to-night. It is not that I want. I came to inform you of all you should know, to render that decision wise for yourself, and just to those you love. Look at me well. See if in my face you read one line of hesitation, or if in my eye you can discover one gleam of pity or remorse. Once—it was long, bitter years ago—I had pity, I had remorse, I had love, I had—no matter what—every thing I have not now and wish not to have. Enough ! Remember my words. Ponder them through the dark hours you had devoted to sleep. Weigh, decide, and to-morrow will I hear your answer. *Felice notte, mia cara!*” and bowing himself nearly to the ground, he laid his hand upon his heart and disappeared.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DREAMS AND REALITIES. EXPLANATION AND DISAPPOINTMENT.
THE AUTHOR BEGINS TO GET HIS BOAT OUT OF THE FOG.

It may be imagined that Nina slept little that night. After the door closed upon her visitor, she remained for nearly an hour motionless. So crushing and overwhelming was the trial she had just passed through, that it left her no more even the power to suffer or resist. Abandoning herself to a paroxysm of tears, she lay hoping and pray-

ing for death to come and end her horrible sufferings. She reviewed her past life, but could see nothing that seemed to her to merit such dreadful punishment, and she was almost tempted to accuse God of injustice. Ere the dreadful thought, however, was fairly formed, the last gleam of reason left her brain, and she lay for a long time in a sort of half unconscious trance, in which the recollection and forgotten reminiscences of her childhood and infancy came and went through the dim and misty chambers of memory like a train of smiling phantoms, who ever disappeared as she was about to embrace them. One vision, sweeter and more beautiful than all the rest, lingered lovingly near her, ever looking steadily and tenderly into her eyes, sometimes stretching forth its arms as if it would clasp her to its bosom. This, although she remembered not the face or aspect of that dear one, she knew was the spirit of her mother, come down from Heaven in this dark hour of her daughter's affliction, to look pityingly upon her and to fill her soul with a trusting hope that they should once more meet, after all the fiery ordeals and bitter trials of earth, when her racked frame and tortured heart and madly beating brain slept peacefully beneath the flowery turf. Yes, in that dark and dreadful hour, when the agony of her whole life seemed concentrated in every breath her panting bosom drew, came to the soul of the girl, for the first time in her life, the knowledge of her Mother and the sense of that boundless love which ever watched over her, like her guardian angel stooping to bless her from the azure Heaven.

Gradually, as the night faded and morning woke, the visions one by one departed, and the poor girl felt her earthly faculties reawaken to all the dread and real horrors by which she was surrounded. Alone and far away from sympathy, friends, or the faintest hope of timely assistance, she saw herself wholly in the power of a being who seemed, had he ever been human, to have anticipated his existence in the other world, and already assumed the form of demon. Helpless and hopeless, still the young girl turned instinctively to God, and felt not, even in her dire extremity, that she was all forsaken. The still small voice of hope whispered of release and triumph. Composing herself as well as she was able, she arose and put on her dress, and, sitting down by the window, that looked out upon the dreary suburbs, awaited the course of events.

Her first impulse had been to make her escape from the house, and find her way, as best she might, to Mrs. Carleton's; but, she found that her door was firmly locked, and the window offered no prospect of escape. Beside, it did not seem to her that it was the best way now to shrink. Something told her that courage and presence of mind would preserve her. And so she grew serene and calm and and patient.

She had not long to wait. In a few moments the sound of footsteps on the stairs made her heart beat fast and wild; but, by a superhuman effort, she choked down the sobs that rose in her throat, and it was with a firm and unfaltering aspect, that she saw the door open and the hateful face of Pipson appear.

"Good morning, my charmer," said Mr. Pipson, again bowing low. "I hope you slept well. It is not always the case that one rests comfortably, for the first time, in a strange bed; but I am sure you are quite superior to such prejudices. Beside, you are looking divinely fresh and beautiful this morning. You must have had pleasant dreams. Would that I could have the honor of figuring in your midnight visions."

"Wretch," muttered Nina, through her set teeth.

"By the way, it is very remarkable," observed Pipson, "how prettily, even a naughty word sounds from a pretty mouth. Now I don't imagine I could hear the term 'wretch' applied to me by any ordinary male pair of lips, without feeling considerably indignant thereat; but in your case, I find it really pleasant."

"Pray, go on, Mr. Pipson. Will you tell me why you use me thus? What have I ever done to you, or to any human being, to deserve such dreadful punishment as this? If there is one spark of manhood or honor yet left in your heart, I implore you to pause before you trample the life out of a poor, unoffending and helpless girl, to whom death is terrible, but who still will sooner die than submit to the faintest thought of dishonor. You have told me a dreadful tale, implicating those I love; but I have thought it calmly over, and am sure it cannot be true. Your only purpose was to frighten me into compliance with some dreadful wish. It cannot be true."

"Say you so? But, by the God that made us, it is true, and nothing less," exclaimed Pipson fiercely, and with a gesture of savage joy and triumph. "I'll tell you in ten words, so that you yourself, my pretty one, shall see it is not so unreasonable as you choose to imagine. You must know, that some time ago, in a midnight orgy, at which your Celio's friend was present, he had misfortune to slay a man; purely, I grant you, in self defence, for I myself was present and saw the whole transaction. Many others were by, but they have all been carefully removed beyond the reach of the law's longest claw. The ladies who were present are no longer in the city; a blackleg who also formed one of the company, dares not open his lips only as I bid him; and I myself, if summoned by Earnest, he well knows, will not hesitate to accuse him falsely, and fasten the guilt irrevocably upon him. One alone remained, who also was present, who could neither be bought nor intimidated. Him, and your lover Celio, I have safely in custody. No human being but myself and my faithful minion to whom the task was intrusted, knows where they are or can by any means discover. Earnest has confessed the homicide, but proclaimed his power to establish it as an act purely of self defence, justifiable by the laws of God and man; and so it was," continued he, with a diabolical sneer wrinkling his lip—"but I rather think he will have more difficulty than he imagines in producing his proof! Now my dear, you see that the fate of this man is in my hands. You alone can save him. Be mine and I give the wretch his life. Spurn me, and this hand fastens the hempen noose about his neck."

"Monster! is this possible?" at length exclaimed Nina, after some moment's silence.

"Yes, and a great deal more too, my pretty one. I forgot all about your particular friend, Mrs. Carleton—whom may the devil and Job Pipson confound! She is one of the most conspicuous columns in the magnificent temple of ruin upon whose altar I am about to offer my hecatomb of victims. For her, poverty, want, hunger, disgrace, and dishonor await to dog her steps in ghastly procession through the world. After the annihilation of all the rest, including your own pretty self, I consecrate my future life into one living concentrated hate, that shall pursue her, like an all-seeing eye, through her existence, and at length trample upon her dishonored grave. In me, revenge and hate have become sublime. They inspire me like a God. All the aspirations of my ambitious nature, all the glorious dreams of youth, all the disappointed frivolities that once formed my world of golden visions, what were they? Even had fruition attended them all, what were they to be compared to the gigantic, the magnificent and Godlike hate which now inspires me! By Heaven! beautiful witch, I had almost rather that you should refuse, and doom you all to that destruction! Nay, I take back my promise. I will not save a hair of one of their heads. You, too, I will possess, and all shall fall into the same wide and yawning grave. I am growing mad with my delight. I can no longer refrain from quaffing the bright cup which brims and sparkles within my reach. Beautiful devil, thine eyes attract me sweetly to my revenge! I feed, in rapt anticipation, upon the roses of thy young cheek. Already thy loathing form writhes in my fierce embrace. Already thy shrieks and curses rise like incense to my maddened senses. Prepare, I come! It is my hour!" And with eyes glaring and lips covered with the foam of madness, he sprang toward Nina. Frantically she avoided him and sought to make her escape by the door; but, catching her by the arm, he drew her fiercely back; with a wild scream she escaped his grasp, and fled from corner to corner of the room, the fiend in hot pursuit. Oh! what a chase of life and death, and all that makes life sweet and death horrible, was there! Not long could it have lasted; for second by second, the life-strength ebbed from the limbs of the poor victim; and, palpitating and panting in the last agony of despair, she was about to fall helpless at the feet of her tormentor, when a noise of rushing feet in the passage and upon the stairway, preceded the violent opening of the door; and Pipson, turning savagely to see who had dared thus to interrupt him in his hour of triumph, found himself face to face with Captain Earnest. Behind him stood Celio and Merivale and Mr. Bunch. In an instant after, Mrs. Carleton herself ran joyously up stairs and clasped Nina in her arms.

The poor girl, however, was by this time insensible even of her rescue, and lay upon the bosom of her friend, pale and cold as marble. It was long before she recovered the power of recognizing her friends, or being made aware of the critical escape she had made. Tenderly

as a mother carries her child, Mrs. Carlton bore her burden down the stairs, to another room, and watched her with anxious solicitude.

As for Mr. Pipson and the party by whom he had been interrupted, a few words, will suffice. Merivale requested, as a particular favor of Captain Earnest, that he should be permitted to dispose of Mr. Pipson in his own fashion. This was readily granted, and Merivale departed with his prisoner, now meek and obedient as a child, promising to render a good account of him in a day or two.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ADELAIDE AND SOLITUDE—MORE JUDICIOUS REFLECTIONS.— A DECLARATION.

We must now go back to Mrs. Carlton, who, delighted by the success her fair protegee had met upon the stage, heard with pleasure of her acceptance of the invitation to visit her acquaintance of the Green Room; and, after impressing it upon her not to stay too late, bade her good bye affectionately, and went to her room to spend the evening in quiet reading and contemplation. She waited patiently till ten o'clock, when, with a most parental solicitude, she began to be restless and uneasy, frequently going to the window to see if any one was coming, and then checking herself for being so uneasy, as the distance to which Nina had gone was so great that even if the party should not be unusually late, she had no fair right to expect her return at least before midnight.

Two more hours, therefore, of thought, memory, anticipation, whatever genius dark or pleasant came to minister to her lonely reverie.

Those are precious hours in which the present with its world of anxieties and responsibilities for a definite time puts off, the soul relaxes its vigils, and reclining as it were upon the past, reviews the long procession of disappointed hopes and baffled aspirations which gather under the potent wand of the enchanter, Memory. Every moment of such an hour is fraught with its beautiful and invigorating lesson to the heart. One of the greatest evils, as well as the greatest dangers of the present time, is that we all rush onward so furiously as to lose entirely the benefit of these hours of calm and instructive retrospection. To the men and women of the present day the world is a wild and stormy ocean, over whose boiling surges we are driven as if by an irresistible wind. No time to pause, to look back, to compare the past with the present, to contrast our anticipations with

their more sober realities ; and thus to draw lessons of wisdom from experience, to develope the judgment and refine the heart.

Adelaide had not been long engaged in this pensive yet pleasing reverie, when she was interrupted by a sharp quick ring of the bell, which she did not for a moment mistake for the tones of acquaintance-ship.

The reader may smile at our speaking of the tone of the bell ; but every bell has almost as many different tones as the human voice itself. America's most original poet has finely seized upon and illustrated this truth, in his remarkable poem of "The Bells." The clangor of the midnight fire-bell, sending out its cries of alarm to the startled city ; the same bell tolling sadly the muffled story of the dead, or pulsating calmly hour by hour the monotonous flight of time, possesses tones as distinct and strongly marked, as easily recognized by the practiced ear, as the voice of a well known friend in its anger, its sorrow, its love, its despair. But the house-bell, of all others, tells the most diverse stories to the watching listener. It is not necessary to see the face, to hear the voice or the well known footstep, to know that the beloved one is returning. The first touch of the bell sends a corresponding tingle thrilling through the veins, even more vividly than the grasp and pressure of hands and lips. But no bright tone, no sweet emotion of anticipated gladness, came upon the vibration of the bell that roused Mrs. Carlton from her dreamy reverie. It fell cold and dead upon the heart like any other ordinary noise, startling for a moment the dreamer from her dreams and then scarcely thought of or remembered more. In a moment after, however, a servant entered, bearing a letter which he delivered to the lady, observing that the bearer had said that it did not require an answer, and departed. The incident was scarcely sufficient to arouse Adelaide completely from her absorbing reflections, and she was resettling herself in her luxurious arm-chair, when the superscription of the letter accidentally caught her eye, and she started as if something well known and hated had passed before her. She was now evidently and thoroughly aroused ; and, taking up the letter, she opened it with trembling fingers and began eagerly to read. As we abhor mysteries of every description, and devoutly trust that our parish of readers share with us in this religious sentiment, we shall proceed to look over the lady's shoulder while she reads,

" Adelaide :

" As the complicated web I have for years been spinning is now nearly finished, and my life moves rapidly to its culmination, I have sought, what I seldom seek, solitude, memory and my own thoughts. To you, the only being I have ever loved on earth, whom I still love, and yet fiercely hate, the only being by whose influence my character could have been rescued from the downward course along which its wild and ungovernable passions have fiercely dragged it, I now will relate the history of my life-struggle. You cannot choose but read and understand, for around you all its interest centres ; and no woman,

not even Adelaide Carlton, is insensible to the flattery of a life which immolates itself, both for this world and the next, for her unreturned love.

Naturally, Adelaide, you and I were much alike. True, you possessed many rich and ennobling qualities which I lacked ; but there was something in the depth of our self-criticism, in the unconquerable independence and pride with which we almost sought difficulties and dangers, but to prove to ourselves our power of resisting or overcoming them, that made us, to a certain point, congenial spirits. There we separated ; you to devote yourself, with a martyrdom which I still believe sprang rather from pride than benevolence, to the well-being of others ; while I, absorbed in the intensity of my appetites and the gratification of my indomitable selfishness, commenced a career directly opposite to your own. For others you have sacrificed yourself—I have sacrificed others to myself. You have been the dupe of your own false idea of honor and feminine glory, I have been the dupe of nothing, but have made all others my dupes ; yet we both arrive, Adelaide, at very much the same conclusion—bitterness and ashes. Your magnanimity of character, your surpassing self-devotion, the martyrdom of your whole life ; what have they gained you ? Even what all my cautious and selfish plans, my iron perseverance, my unconquerable will, have gained for me—disappointment and disgust.

Yet still, through all my bitter life, from the hour when you and I were children and lifelong playmates, who together had chased the butterflies through many a summer bower, and wove the wild flowers in garlands to crown our innocent brows, have I ever fondly loved and truly worshipped you and you alone. You might have been the angel blessing of my life. Had you loved me, we had both been glorified beyond the common capacity of human destiny ; but, as it was, my life has been a blank—no, not a blank—would to God it were, for sometimes, even yet, the fiend of remorse comes to torture me, when I would find slumber and forget life.

I do not write these things with the hope, nor even with the wish, that they should produce any effect upon you. A few weeks since, while you wept over the coffin of that husband you never loved, you spurned with proud disdain the lover who writhed at your feet and begged for one look of even human pity from your eyes for all his sufferings. You denied him that, and in that hour a new demon of cruelty and revenge passed into his soul, and took possession of it as a temple. No power on earth now, Adelaide, not even your love, were that possible, could now turn aside the fate-like destiny that hangs around and encompasses us all.

Long have I watched your actions and revolved your character, but have not been able to quite satisfy myself whether or not you have ever loved. I trust you have, so that my revenge will thus be greater and more worthy of my pride. If you love aught human, other than your protegee the Italian, it is Celio. I would I could watch your face, Adelaide, as you peruse that name, then could I be

satisfied. Yes, I think you do love Celio; and thinking so, I feel a new thrill of joy in describing to you the destruction in which he is involved. It is an intricate piece of work, of which I feel proud and satisfied, but you shall hear.

Celio is inextricably blended in the affair of Captain Earnest. Their journal has been principally managed by Celio, and he must have been privy to all the leading transactions of Earnest, both in and out of the office. These transactions, which I have spent many weeks in investigating and unraveling, are of a startling and unfamous character; or, if not so, can easily be made to appear so. Celio really, perhaps, may not be implicated in them all, but it can be proved that he is, and it will be. Were Earnest himself called upon, he might undoubtedly exculpate his young friend of participation in his strange and incredible career. But that career now rapidly approaches its fatal end. Within a few days, I hope to have the pleasure of seeing Captain Earnest—though that is not his name—committed to the gallows. He is now under arrest on a charge of murder, which he has partly confessed, and which will be irrevocably fastened upon him. When he is gone, Celio will have lost his only powerful friend and protector, and cannot oppose himself to the tide of accusations and testimony which will be set in motion to sweep him away.

Nina, your beautiful protege, can to-morrow tell you a tale of horror which you have no power to imagine or conceive. To her I leave it, choosing that you should hear it from her own dishonored lips, that it may thus search deeper your heart for another pang.

In a word, destruction comes upon you all. Celio, and a stranger named Merivale, whom I have ascertained to be a brother of Earnest, are now in close and loathsome confinement, in charge of a faithful creature of my own. Whether they will ever escape depends entirely upon myself. Probably they will not. Probably I shall so far relax the usual parsimony of my habits, as to pay the board of those gentlemen in their present agreeable quarters. Ha! ha! ha! A liberal idea, truly!

Perhaps you believe that yourself are to escape; and so well do I know you that I think this would be an additional torture to your noble mind; but I cannot afford the luxury of this torture—I cannot bear that you should escape; therefore listen to your horoscope, and remember well, Oh beautiful being, whom it would have been my life's delight to cherish and surround with all that can embellish or illuminate this dark life—remember that your future destiny is marked out by myself, and is the result of my own deliberate will.

I hold in my hands mortgages upon all your late husband's property, for moneys I from time to time advanced him in the regular course of business. If his speculations sometimes failed, if his judgment was at fault, or if he listened to bad advice and thus became bankrupt, surely it was no fault of mine. You may suspect that I was at the bottom of it all—I cannot help that. Indeed it would please me for you to do so. At any rate, he died a beggar, leaving his wife, the

beautiful Adelaide, a pauper. For a time you were rescued by the interference of Earnest, brought about, as I have since learned, through the solicitations of that young viper, Celio. But now Earnest is out of the way. Dead men, and especially men who have been hung, do not come back to invalidate mortgages nor to scrutinize claims. I am once more in possession of all my power over you. I will pursue you from hour to hour and from day to day. Homeless and houseless, you shall become a beggar for work to procure food; and when at last, by long suffering and much prayer to the purse-proud apes of fashion whom you now despise, you have obtained employment, I will blast your character and snatch the hungry morsel from your very lips.

Then, after all has failed, you will seek dishonor as a relief from want. Nay, do not shudder nor curl your lip in indignation! You know not how powerful a logician is hunger. Stronger than virtue, than pride, than a woman's estimation of her own honor, is hunger; and beneath its resistless arguments shall the proud and haughty Adelaide Carlton prostrate herself for money, sell her endearments and her caresses to whomsoever will give her the wherewithal to prolong her wretched and loathsome existence. Thus shall you drag out the years, thus will I, like a fury, pursue your steps; and when at last, long sought and welcome death comes to relieve you, I will be there to lash your soul into eternity. Adelaide, I know I am mad. My intellect is no longer master of itself, and I am truly and literally a maniac; therefore it is that all these dreadful things cannot well be helped nor prevented, even did I wish it. All must come and pass away, even as it is here written.

“Farewell! PIPSON.”

The perusal of this letter raised a storm of contending emotions in the bosom of Mrs. Carlton, which deprived her of strength and left her almost powerless even to think. After a few moments, however, she gradually recovered possession of her faculties, and her memory reverted with intense force to Nina and the perilous situation in which she was placed.—It was now past eleven, and in a few moments, at farthest, Nina ought to return home. She determined therefore to wait in patience, trusting that the letter of Pipson was a mere artifice of that wretched man to torture her, or that at best he had overrated his own power of mischief, and exaggerated the extent of the danger in which her dearly loved protegee was placed. As for Celio, she saw that it was hatred alone that dictated the expressions in Pipson's letter, and that he in reality possessed no knowledge which would give him a legitimate power over him. She even doubted that he was in confinement; and as she reasoned with her apprehensions, one by one, she almost caused them to disappear, and at length persuaded herself into the momentary anticipation of Nina's return; trusting, meanwhile, that the morning would bring back Celio and dissipate all the horrid illusions called up by that dreadful letter.

But in vain she waited. Midnight came and went, and yet no sound

broke the stillness of the slumbering city, and terror began anew to steal upon her faculties. Restlessly she paced her chamber, looking out ever and anon wistfully into the night, striving to penetrate the sea of darkness that lay still and heavy between her and those she loved. One by one the hours went by, and none came to cheer her or restore her terrified heart to hope.

In that dreary night when she was thus gradually forced to see that she was all alone, with no eye but God's to see her, no hand but his to support her ; and with all the beings whom she loved in danger of swift and irremediable destruction, all the power and strength of her beautiful character came, like the night-blooming ceres, into flower. Wisely and cautiously she scanned all the circumstances by which they were hemmed in, searched her memory for hints to guide her in her future proceedings, and enlightened by the knowledge that ever follows virtuous determination and right action in behalf of others, decided upon what was best to be done.

Until morning no step could be taken. Even could she succeed in procuring a carriage and attendants at that hour, she knew not where to proceed in search of Nina, for she had not taken the precaution to ascertain the address of the acquaintance with whom she was visiting. Calmly and prayerfully, therefore, still she paced the chamber and waited for the morning. She even, as the night fell into that dark and breathless swoon preceding the hour of dawn, lay down upon the sofa, and for a few moments refreshed her agitated frame and exhausted strength with needed slumber.

No sooner, however, was it fairly light than she rang the bell, and when the sleepy domestic came in, yawning and rubbing his astonished eyes at this unwonted summons, she bade him procure a carriage instantly and prepare to accompany her.

Her first step was to ascertain the residence of Signora Gherlandini, where Nina had gone ; but how to do this she knew not. At length it struck her it would be the most likely way to find out some of the people connected with the opera. It was still too early to find any one at the opera house, and she could think of no way but to wait patiently till some one arrived. She accordingly drove there and sat in her carriage, shivering with suspense for a long time. The sun rose and the city awoke and began its daily toil. Gradually the streets filled with passers by hastening onward to their vocations ; and many was the brief but eager glance of curiosity cast upon that vehicle standing so quiet and lonely there in the early morning.

But even opera treasurers do come to their offices ; and at last when she was well nigh despairing, a creeping figure made its appearance and entered one of the little doors. She immediately despatched her servant to question this man, and, to her joy, learned from him the direction so much needed. It was a long way off ; and bidding the driver make all possible speed, as life and death hung upon every moment, the carriage dashed furiously up the street, arriving at the house where her Nina was staying, at the moment we have already described.

The meeting between the two friends was tender and joyful beyond description. Adelaide had never had a daughter to love, nor had she ever dared to permit herself to love with all her strength, any being but this sweet and gentle child. Nina herself had never known a mother's affection, and the memory of her childish days, passed like a dim and half remembered dream in the chamber of her father, was too vague and spiritual to answer the demand of her heart for human sympathy and love. Therefore she clung to Adelaide with all the confiding tenderness of a daughter and the trustfulness of a sister. Long Adelaide held her to her bosom, calming and soothing her agitated frame to tranquility and peace; and when they all returned to Mrs. Carlton's house, and met like the members of one family in the pleasant parlor, they seemed as cheerful and happy as if sorrow and sufferings had never been.

Mr. Bunch, our somewhat neglected, but by no means forgotten friend, had "stuck" to Captain Earnest, to use his own elegant diction, "like shoemaker's wax." He seemed to feel such genuine happiness, in having at last made up his mind to be honest, that Earnest could not find it in his heart to mortify him by sending him away. He therefore made his appearance in Mrs. Carlton's parlor, and shamled off, with a gait like that of a Newfoundland dog, to a queerly shaped lounge in a corner, in which he ensconced himself, looking out from under his shaggy eyebrows, in evident satisfaction and pride, upon the party whose happiness he had been so instrumental in procuring.

"Mr. Bunch," at length said Earnest, suddenly spying him out in his retreat, "come forward, my good and faithful friend, and receive your share of my thanks. I have also a proposition to make to you, which, if you accept, may serve at least to convince you of the sincerity of my gratitude for your inestimable services. Come to me to-morrow and we will see if we cannot effect an understanding with each other."

Nina, who was very much exhausted by the suffering and excitement through which she had passed, now begged to be permitted to retire; and Captain Earnest, remembering that he had many things to do to amend the confusion into which his complicated and multifarious affairs had necessarily fallen, took his departure, leaving Celio and Mrs. Carlton alone.

There was a long silence, during which both seemed lost in reverie. At length Mrs. Carlton spoke.

"Celio," she said, I have something quite serious to say to you; and, as I am a good deal your senior, and have had much more experience of life than you, I trust you will receive my admonitions with the docility of a son to his mother."

Celio looked up in surprise. There was nothing but kindness and affection, save perhaps a slight tremor, in the voice of Mrs. Carlton, and certainly the words she had uttered breathed only interest and affection; yet somehow a strange harsh chill passed through his heart as she spoke, and he felt half vexed and dissatisfied both with himself and her.

"You say nothing, Celio," she continued, "and therefore I trust you see the justice of my observation."

"Go on, my dear madam," said the puzzled Celio.

After another pause she resumed, but spoke with apparent pain and difficulty, as if she were struggling to keep down some strong emotion that threatened to overmaster her.

"Celio," she said at length, slowly and distinctly, "I need not tell you the deep interest I have always taken in your welfare. My love for my dear Nina is now the only feeling which can compare with that I feel for you. Therefore listen to what I have to say, for it concerns you both and nearly. I think—nay am almost certain—that Nina loves you, and I believe notwithstanding the dream you had some time ago, that you love her. Nay, start not. I have not sought to pry into your secrets, Celio; but I see not how it can well be otherwise. The happy *eclaircissement* of this morning has put it in my power to say what I have long wished to say. I am now able to give my Nina at least a home, and I offer her to you in sincerity and true affection. Take her Celio, and may both be happy.

For some moments Celio seemed transfixed with astonishment. At length shadows of contending emotions fled swiftly across his face, and he spoke wildly and rapidly.

"Oh Adelaide, this cruel misinterpretation of my inmost heart-secret from you! Would I had died ere by you I had thus been misunderstood. Fond and self-deluding fool that I have been! I have said, in the pride of my vanity, she reads my heart, knows and sees all the wild worship which it bears for her, and is not angry; therefore I wait patiently. Years, long, long years, will be necessary, until I have made a name worthy of so much perfection; and when it shall be no more a selfish insult to cast myself and all that I am and hope to be at her feet. This has been my dream of life. Long and cruelly I struggled with the love that, born in my heart without my own consent, grew and flourished there until its roots have impregnated with the divine aroma of love its every fibre; and now she, the being whom I beheld and worshipped, as the consummation of myself, the sister-spirit of my spirit, who in another and brighter world was to complete my imperfect existence, bids me, with indifference and a mockery of motherly affection and love, to wed another!"

He ceased, choked with the sobs which he could no longer repress; and throwing himself in an attitude of wild abandonment at the feet of Adelaide, he wept childlike and convulsively. It was many minutes ere any other sound was heard in that apartment, save the young man's despairing sobs. At length he felt her hand softly touch his head, and she said simply,

"Look up, Celio."

A thrill of joy shot through his heart, for that tone was not to be mistaken. He raised his face, all pale and tearful, and fixed his eyes upon hers, as if he would read and confirm therein a glorious destiny.

"Celio," she repeated, while all the deep and thoughtful earnest-

ness of her nature come up from her heart to beam in her face and eyes ; do you then so love me, with all your heart and soul, and have I suffered my own weak jealousy to blind me to the blessed truth ? Oh ! this is too much happiness to be real. Know you not, Oh Celio, that you are the star of my dreams, the angel who is to guide me through the bright beatitudes of the spiritual world ? and shall we then anticipate death and, by being united, become even in this world partakers of a divine life ? Yes, I love you with all my heart and soul. I am yours forever !”

CHAPTER XXV.

TABLEAU AND CURTAIN, TO THE MUSIC OF THE READER'S APPLAUSE.

Our story is done ; but if any of our readers have still preserved a love for the good old plan of disposing in detail of all the characters introduced into the pages of a book—tracing out their histories, one by one, until all are locked comfortably into their nuptial chambers or lying peacefully in their graves—let such accompany us to the farm of the robbers, lying on the green banks of the sunny Connecticut—Earnest's present to his old companions. Here he will find a wonderful transformation indeed—not only in the face of nature, but in the character of the human occupants of the place. The sterile hills and worn-out pastures, by the application of a few simple practical discoveries in agricultural chemistry, have been covered with fruitful and luxuriant abundance. Here waves the yellow wheat, in rich and swelling undulations, where once the breeze sang mournfully, among the alders and the brown mulleins : while in the center of an immense garden, filled with every species of beautiful flower and useful vegetable, stands a fair and comely mansion, surrounded by a little village of subordinate dwellings. Everywhere prosperity and plenty smile around—and the aspect of the whole scene is like the realization of some beautiful dream of the future.

It is a bright and sunny day, and every thing invites to peace and happiness. Let us enter this fairy realm, and see if its interior answers to the outside form. As we approach, troops of sweet, fresh-looking children, bright and joyous with the atmosphere of that untamed independence, without which childhood dies, leap out from every flowery avenue ; and wreathing themselves in graceful bands, welcome us with dances and pretty, gleeful shoutings. Anon appear many full-grown people, men and women, all serene and happy, with their not unlovely faces shining with truth and peace. It seems that we should know those features—and yet it cannot be ! Surely it is a dream !

But no!—They draw nearer—they hold out their hands smilingly—they recognize us, and hasten eagerly to bid us welcome. Here is our old acquaintance the Screech-Owl, with the saucy Rosalina leaning confidently upon his arm. Behind them came Dandy Jake with little Kitty—and Virginia and Margaret, and Matilda, and at last Pat Rainbow himself, with his faithful Molly, who seems to have mollified herself to her girlish gentleness, and no longer kicks her lord and master out of bed. And here, too, as I live, come Mr. Bunch and his amiable spouse, attended by Pipson! Do our eyes deceive us! No—by the veritable Job Pipson himself! He is a sweet, gentle-looking old man, now, and a little tottering child—the youngest walking anatomy in the domain—clings to his fingers and looks up trustfully in his face—a touching illustration of the meeting of infancy and age, at the point where the sphere of life unites its endless circle.—All are the same as we have known them, yet how different!

“ Hard featured men, or with proud angry looks
Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,
Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,
Or other such foul masks with which ill thoughts
Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man;
And women, too, ugliest of all things evil,
When false or frowning. * * * * *

I hid myself
Within a fountain in the public square,
Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
Seen in a wave under the green leaves; and soon
Those ugly human shapes and visages,
Of whom I spoke as having wrought me pain,
Passed floating through the air, and fading still
Into the winds that scattered them; and those
From whom they passed seemed mild and lovely forms
After some foul disguise had fallen.” *

Within the fair home of this lovely domain, and surrounded by its happy and grateful inhabitants, who owed all to the wise goodness of Captain Earnest, the marriage of Celio and Adelaide was celebrated. Earnest gave the bride away, and Merrivale and Nina, assisted by Dandy Jake and the little Kitty, acted as groom and bridesmaid. When the ceremony was concluded, Merrivale gently stooped and whispered something in Nina's ear, which caused the rich blood to dart like rosy sunlight over the heaven of her face. To our fair readers we leave the solution of the whispered mystery, and the gathering up of the links still missing in our chain-fable. Our task is over. We have conducted a company of human beings through a career of human crime and suffering to that peace and happiness which are the natural inheritance of man, and to which the whole world at length begins to look forward and aspire.

Farewell!

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